

FORGET

Me Not

San Benito County Jail Writings



Cover art by Patty L. Cain

Forget Me Not
Selections from Writing Workshop
a weekly class offered by Gavilan College to E, F, and C-pods

Edited by Kimberly Jean Smith
Special thanks to D.G.

Hollister, CA
USA

Spring, 2017

All rights reserved.

This book is dedicated to Alice
Died April 2017

FORGET Me Not

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction:	
Who was Alice?	i-ii

IN RELATIONSHIPS

My Cellmate Sisters, by Sophia Escobedo	1
What I Want, by Hector Cortes	2
My Darkened Thoughts, by Rose Gemette	3
Three Feathers, by Joanna James	4
You and I, by Letecia R. Gutierrez	5
Wonderful Dream, by Ray J. Gonzales	6
Blowing in the Wind, by Anonymous	7
Sophia and Leticia, by Ms. Saxy Barajas-Roa	8
Two Poet, Two Versions, by Gabriel Rodarte and Sophia	10-11
My G. Son, by Leticia R. Gutierrez	12-13
Bobby My Other Half, by Sonia Perez	14

MOM AND DAD

Untitled, by Krystal Arballo, Socorro Del Real, Rose Gemette, Katherine Russell, and Brittney Stuffel	17
The Walk, by Jakob Bohon	18
The Chief, by	19
Bobby and Sonia, by Bobby DeLeón	20
I Slapped Him Across the Face, by Jose Zavala Lopez	22

SUFFERING

Withdrawal, by Teetee	25
Hurts, by Anonymous	26
Untitled, by Josh Garza	29
Selfishly Destructive, by E. Robles	30
My Addiction, by Brittney S.	31

TOTAL

Perfect Just Perfect, by Tara Watkins	32
My Head Was Hit, by Andrew H.	34
This is Who I Am, by Michael A. Keith	35-36
Beautiful Disaster, by K'T Russell	37
Who I Am, by Leticia R. Gutierrez	38
Sorry is Like Don't + Roll, by Brandie Jackson	39
My Country How I See It, by Jose Zavala Lopez	40
Dear God, by Andrew Sosa	42
Who is She? My Autobiography Poem, by Shelly Ann Lind-Arviso	43

WORK

Encouragement, by Anonymous	44
Mind Right, by Liza Marie Gonzalez	45
Always on my Mind, by Christopher Markert	46
Acceptance, by Robert	47
Behind Jail Walls, by P Locs	48
Untitled, by Daniel Jimenez	49

FINDING MEANING

Thankful, by Regalado	50
What Happened to Me, by Henry Soza	51
Let LIght Shine Out of this Crazy Darkness, by Krystal Arballo	52
Genie of Mine, by Ray I Gonzalez	53
Dragon Song "Motherhood", by Michael Marshall	54
Self Cultivation, by Saige Freitas	55
What Happened to Me, by @CEAZSYRUP	57

CHEESECAKE, ICE CREAM, CUPCAKE, DILL DIP

Who is Sam I Am	58
Bandit Queen of India	60

ALICE

Unknown Friend, by Brandie Jackson	62
Narrow Path, by Sophia Escobado	63



Introduction: Who was Alice?

Alice was a friend of ours, and in April she died some hours after being released from county jail. When we heard about her death, we were shocked, very sad, lost in thoughts.

The day she came in, Alice was so excited, happy, and full of life. She was drunk, rolling around on the floor, laughing and making jokes, not knowing she was going to be gone from this life so quickly.

She was wild at heart and hers was unselfish and big. She was a loner, who loved to talk. She liked to drink and argue and was quick as a whip. She was so funny she could make even toothless people smile.

Like every one of us, she had her struggles. She was homeless, yet never gave up. In any situation she always turned it around and tried to make the best of it. We can't say what really killed her—some people say it was a heart attack, others an overdose.

Her closest friends saw Alice's angry outsides, knowing deep inside she just wanted some loving. One of them described Alice as being like a mean Grandma—a mean grandma that you loved and wanted to cuddle.

As her time in county continued, Alice sobered up. She kept calling out for her heart pill. "Give me my pill," she'd scream, kicking doors and walls. "Give me my fucking pill." She was scared about having a heart attack, and let it be known by yelling.

She wasn't always easy to live with, but she was a precious human being, a beautiful person, and we loved her.

She made an impact on our lives, and we won't forget what she showed us. Even though she struggled in life, she kept persisting. Even though she liked to be alone, she had many friends. Even though she was homeless, she found places to belong. She is a good example of life's-too-short and every life has value. We need to be grateful for the people we have around us and show appreciation to one another. She taught us all that. Live life to the fullest and for real—don't slam dope!

For some of us, our last memory of Alice is when she rolled out, smiling from ear-to-ear. She glanced at us through the window, threw up her deuces, and waved goodbye. Hours later, we were told she had died.

In one of the pods there is a monopoly game piece, a hat that

Alice left behind. She wanted to take it with her, but for some reason didn't. Now it sits on a window ledge. In some moments it seems that's all that's left of Alice, our very good friend. But we know she was a strong believer in Jesus Christ. Now we must have that faith that as we're writing, in this very moment, she's looking down on us and smiling.

Alice's death should matter to the whole community. We are all quick to judge others, but we need to understand—each one of us is human and equally deserving of dignity, respect, and fairness. No one knows what another person has been through at the end of the day and Alice had been through a lot. She was worth knowing, touched many lives, and will be missed.

Alice, you were an angel here
on Earth, and in heaven you are
an angel with wings. You earned
them wings. Alice, we love you.
Rest in peace.

—Written by the women of E and F pod

“If we have not struggled/as hard
as we can/at our strongest/how will we
sense/the shape our losses”

—from “Why We Must Struggle”

by Kay Ryan

In Relationships



My Cellmate Sisters

by Sophia Escobedo

I found myself isolated once again, thinking I was alone not needing no one in my life, I was cool without a friend.

I hid from the world I once knew, because of all the hurts that life brought upon me. All the pains that made me blue.

I knew within myself where this would lead, now I wish I could be freed.

So now I sit here in San Benito County Jail, doing my tiempo with no bail.

Sitting here with all these girls,

As time passes, I thought to myself there alright we could even be pals.

Leticia: here were got Leticia the leader of the pack. Keeping the peace. Avoid making her pissed.

Shelly: we gots shelly drinking coffee all day long, just popping pills believing ain't nothing wrong.

Angelica: The youngest bunch, sing her little heart away. We're hoping she leaves soon. We don't want her to stay.

T: Sweetest as can be, but remember she's a scorpio "she stings like a bee"

Brandi: I just met, playing cards like a real gambler. Hoping when she goes to court god has his hands on judge sanders.

Patty: Just floating on, can't wait just to be gone.

Jojo: We gots Jojo, the Indian, with a big ole heart that no one will ever take apart.

Sophia: Yet, but not least, I'm Sophia just remember me with a line or two, hoping to make you smile, cause the next time you see me, it might be awhile.

So write you see us walking down the street looking all sexy, it's cool to stop and proudly I can say, there goes all my sisters.

What I Want

by Hector Cortes

1. I want to get out of this jail.
2. Stop messing around and being a nobody.
3. I want to get my license and GED.
4. Get a job and start my career.
5. Be a father, build credit, get a house, car, money, and serve my country.
6. Prove my mom that her mijo is going to turn his life around and I want to thank her for everything.
7. I miss my son AJ, I have a lot to make up for.
8. I miss his mom, my baby mama Rosalie, can't wait to make it up to her.

My Darkened Thoughts

by Rose Gemette

I've been in my dark thoughts since I lost my Mom

I've been living in the dark and can't seem to drag myself out of it

One person has showed me how to live again

He has showed me that there is light and that I don't have to live in the dark anymore

So I'm living half in the dark and half in the light

But being with him and our kids shows me every growing light

And I hope for one day to be in the light with him forever

But he is gone, and he is my light, and I can't wait till he is home again

That will be the day I can live in the light forever

Till then I am still living in the dark with my dark thoughts

I hope he knows he and our kids are all the light I need in my life.

3 Feathers

by Joanna James

Embrace Life

This was for my bro my blood brother
I needed to apologize to him about my
Actions towards him before me being here
3 feathers represent my bro, my mother and I.
No matter what we do or say to
Each other “blood is thicker than water.”

You and I

by Leticia R. Gutierrez

Bonnie and Clyde
We ride till we die
He is my husband and
I am his wife—
No matter what happens
Or comes our way
The love that we share
Will never decay—
So remember us—
Yes! Bonnie and Clyde
We ride till we die
Side by side <3

To: Tomahawk

Wonderful Dream

by Ray J. Gonzales

To the one, I hold closest to my heart and soul, fear not my beloved if it be a sad, sad day I must let you go. For all the white thoughts of your beautiful sweet, smart heavenly splendor, held me in the most wonderful dream, dare ever envisioned or seen.

For as I awoke from my sweet heavenly playful splendor a vision of an immaculate angel appeared amongst my slumber. With her eyes full of tears and as I gazed once again I realized it was you! My true love, my best friend.

So quickly, so swiftly I gathered you in a tight loving embrace, kissed those fears from your beautiful sweet angel face.

We talked and laughed on that mythical magical wonderful night.

We talked of our love, life and friendship forever. Both bowed our heads in unison.

Prayed so sincere that are heavenly father us both right here.

But suddenly I awake, by a light in my face and no longer did I friend myself in that sweet tender place.

But my beloved, please understand that if you believe in your dreams, please believe dreams are reality of one's own self-conscious mind.

Thus these dreams will appear to me all the time.

Cause you're the one I'm always and forever thinking of.

Love, Ray

Blowing in the Wind by Anonymous

By your windful of love.

I discovered true love, also a youthful glowing heart.

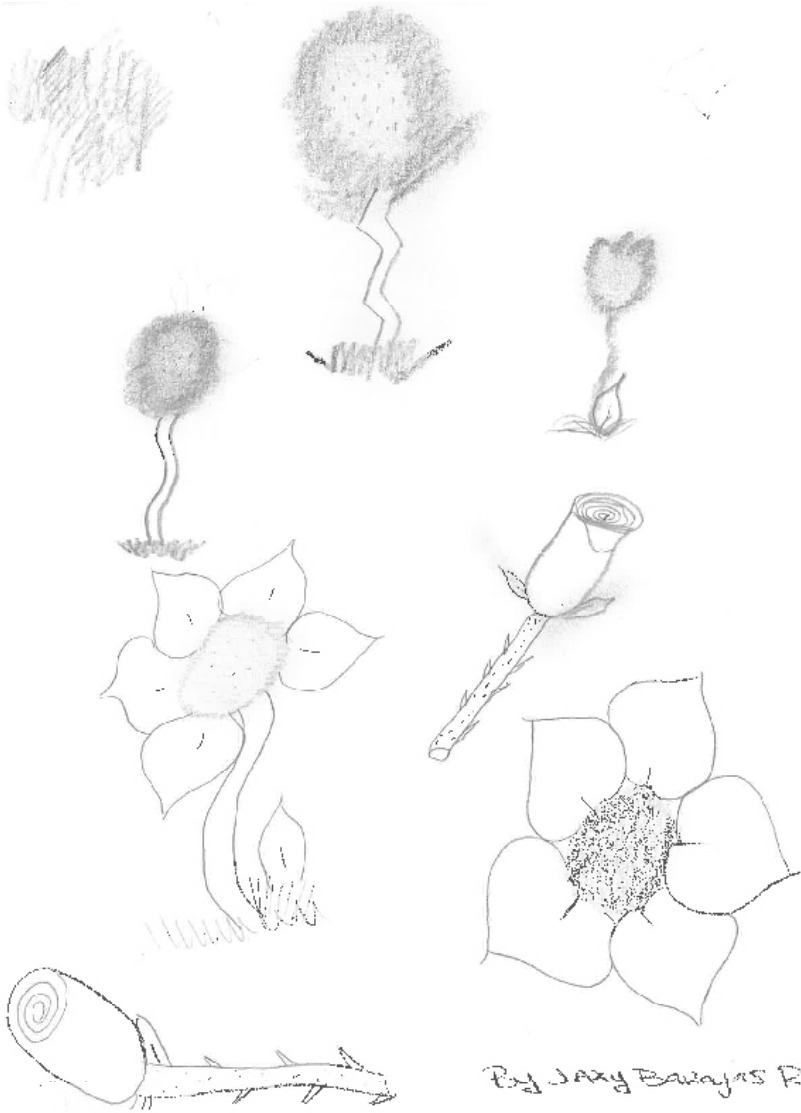
Right from the start, by your beautiful beauty my heart mind and soul, started blowing so joyfully dancing happily in the wind blissfully thinking of true loving bliss, and ones tender wonderful kiss.

This has me believing in true love once again.

Dancing and singing of all these feelings through a windfall of love blowing in the wind.

Sophia and Leticia
by Ms. Saxy Barajas-Roa

Thank you for every new
Confidence I now have in me
Alive and beautiful is how
You taught me to be
I've grown to love the friendship
We've made together
It's a bond I'm hoping
Will last forever
Smiles and laughs is what
We love to share
Thoughts of you two warm my
Heart, us three make a perfect pair
With me a piece of each of you
I will take
Your smiling faces I'll keep deep
In my heart nice and safe
Confidence and strength
Is what you've given me
In myself is now how I
Believe
I love you both.



By Jaxy Bawaj's Roa

Artwork by Jaxy Bawaj's Roa

TWO POETS,

I Do Believe

by Gabriel Rodarte Escobedo

I do believe God above created
You for me to love
I picked you out from all the rest
Because I thought you loved me
Best
I had a heart and it was true but
Now it's gone from me to you
So care for it as I have done
For you have two and I have none
When I die and go to heaven I'll
Wait for you by the golden stairs
If you're not there by judgment
Day I'll know you've gone the other
Way.
I'll give the angels back their
Wings, golden arrows and other things
To prove my love is true to you I'll
Go to hell to be with you.

TWO VERSIONS

From Me to You

by Sophia

I do believe god above
Created you for me to love
I picked you out from all the rest
Because I thought you'd love me best
I had a heart and it was true,
But now it's gone from me to you
So care for I as I have done
For you have two and I have none
When I get to heaven and you're not there
I'll wait for you by the golden stairs
If you're not there by judgment day
I'll know you went the other way
I'll give the angels back their wings
Golden harps and other things
Just to prove my love is true
I'll go to hellaheaven just to be with you

My G. Son
by Leticia R. Gutierrez

On July 14, 2015
An Angel was sent down
To my Daughter and me....

As I saw him coming into
This world fierce and strong....

I prayed to the Lord
Let nothing be wrong....

When he made his 1st sounds
I smiled for joy....

Xerxes Jesse Jamez - Our Angel
Our Boy....

As my Daughter and I watch him grow
We see how smart he is
And all the things he wants to know....

He's like a sponge and learns
Something new each day....

We both love to see him climb
And play, play, play....

His smile is like the Sun
Which brightens our days

His laughter is music
We pray won't ever go away

These moments of life
Can only last so long

Cuz one day he'll grow up
To be a man so strong

So for now we'll enjoy
Lil-wascal that he be

And we'll Love Love Love him

Cuz God gave us this
Precious Angel to join our
Family ∞

To my Papaz (G. Son/Grandson)
Love, His Nana

Bobby My Other Half

by Sonia Perez

I love you so much we been through a lot. We fight, we laugh, we cry
But no matter what we are still by each other sides.

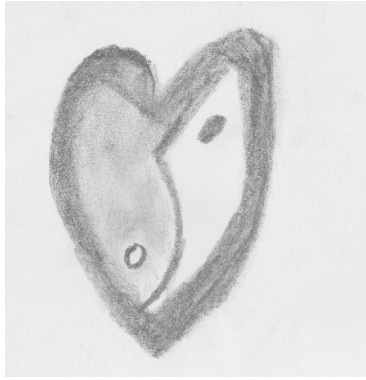
We lived in a pine tree, we lived at the railroad tracks, we lived
everywhere, but no matter what we were still by each other's sides.

I cried, I laughed, and now our baby is gone, and it tore each of our
hearts.

We were mean and lovable. At the time we didn't know how to
express our lost.

I blame you, you blame me, but deep inside it was both of us. We
didn't know what path to take. But no matter what we're still by each
other's side.

I just want to let you know that god won't give us more than we can
handle, so hold on. This is our last ride. So hold on and don't let go
we're going to get it right this time.



Artwork by Travis Naumann

Mom and Dad



Untitled

By Krystal Arballo, Socorro Del Real, Rose Gemette, Katherine
Russell, and Brittney Stuffel

The world is full of ups and downs
Which one never knows
What lies ahead of them

I yell and scream but nobody hears

My negligence and my poor decision
Making it so I'm put here

Just like my father,
The person I NEVER wanted to be
I NEVER wanted to be incarcerated or
Even leave my family due to
Drugs, like he did. All his broken
Promises. Damn!
I am HIM

That I might just really be telling you the truth.

The Walk

by Jakob Bohon

When I walk, I walk with my own feet, but these feet are also theirs. We learn from mistakes of our parents. I am my parents' continuation to change footsteps in my life, whether it's with or without losing a mother or also a father.

Giving up—not today or tomorrow we have to push ourselves, with encouragement, to see tomorrow.

The Chief

by T Alnas

1. I am born a man.
2. I have many kids. They all love me.
3. I was young once, just as they are.
4. I'm a grandfather. They will be grandparents too.
5. I live on the earth and live well.
6. I waste nothing and want nothing.
7. I live free and free I'll be.
8. I am my father's son.
9. I am happy.
10. I am sad.
11. I hope humanity finds peace.
12. I love all.

Bobby and Sonia

By Bobby DeLeón

My heart leaps at thoughts of my child
My heart weep at missing you while
I sit and think of a way
To have a chance to say
All my heart's feelings
Which I'm still dealing
You're always on my mind.
My wife, your mother, so kind
Love of us, I've come to miss
For our family together is what I truly miss.

Sonia & Bobby De Leon

5/10/17



Love, thoughts of my son & wife ----
Sonia, Ubaldo De Leon Jr.

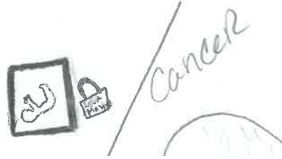
Alex Ubaldo De Leon Jr.

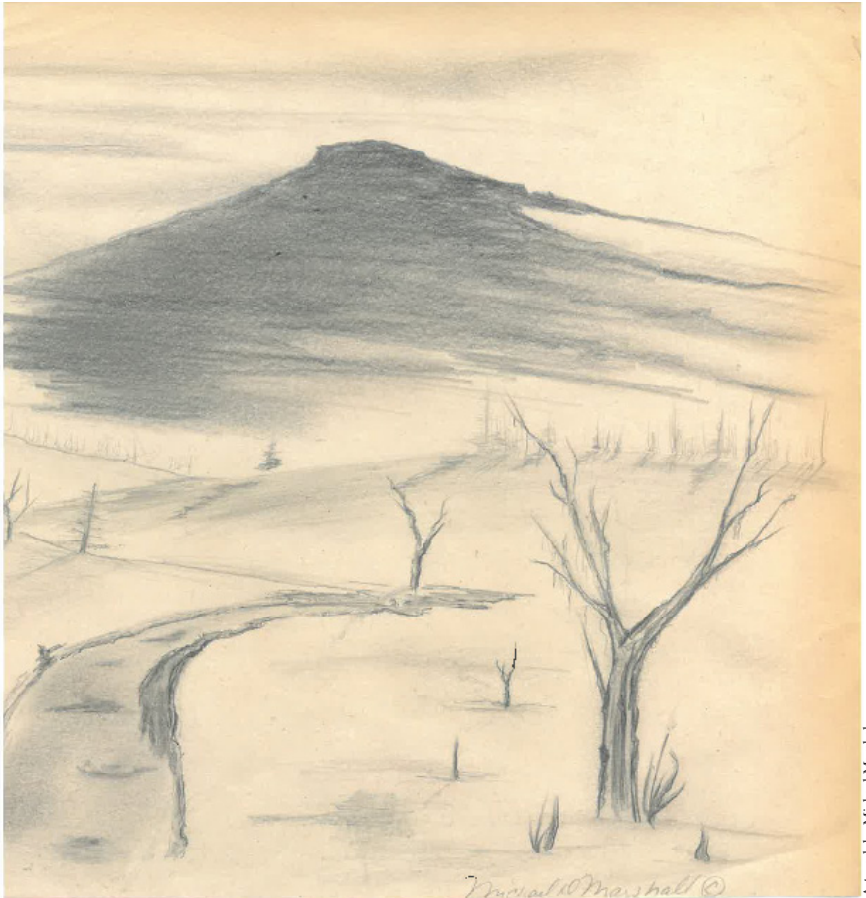
I Slapped Him Across the Face

by Jose Zavala Lopez

1. After discharging from the Army, I lost control.
2. I began to drink and use more.
3. More drinking and more using.
4. Lost driving privileges.
5. Got into fights.
6. Lost many cars.
7. Gave up on working.
8. Went to jail many times.
9. Got O.R. to try inpatient program
10. I did not go to the program
11. I was arrested on a warrant for not going.
12. Here I presently am.
13. Wasn't my intention prior to all this.
14. Born and raised in the united states.
15. Parent's both illegal like driving with no plates.
16. Dad got deported; he missed a lot of birthdays.
17. Mom and I took up the reins, but where it rains it pours.
18. Life made it too where now I have sores.
19. Unseen and seen I need a doctor to cure me.

Suffering





Artwork by Michael Marshall

Withdrawal

By Teetee

I didn't want to do it. But I had to slam dope. Ripping off some lady just to avoid getting sick. That's a low life. That's a sad life. That is my life. Chasing Mr. High, running from Mr. Withdrawal. Pain is the only thing my body will allowf you want to dance the devil knows how.

Hurts

by Anonymous

So when does the feeling subside, inside I cry, weep wondering why I cannot keep

My temper down and my hands from hurting.

Hurting you, hurting me, but mostly

You is what I see. The blood trickles

Down from your nose. As I get put in cuffs. Soon to be home. Not alone.

One who bleeds red, this I've shown

But instead in my head these drugs

Have taken to not paying rent and

Laying rugs as to make it more comfortable

In my head with my temperament. I could

See your pain and I would smile.

How sick am I? Have I always been

This way or did it come to me

While. I sat hearing your words but

I sat in denial thinking how absurd. I

Cannot even be heard. I scream as

Loud as I am please. Please just listen

Now I know you were right.

I am the one who is missing.

You each and every night. For I could

Not control my anger and therefore I'd

Fight. I miss you madly this is for

Sure. I will always regret that day

I should have kept my cool. Not I've

Lost a treasure on my own stupidity

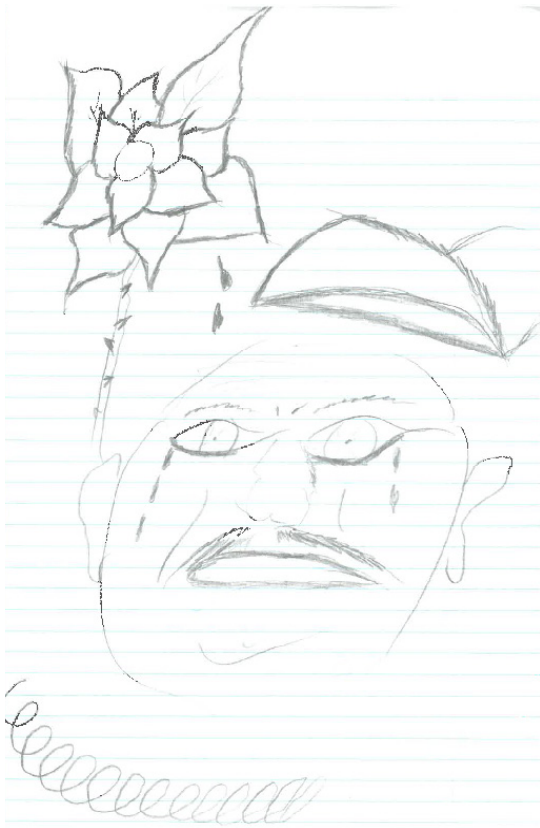
What a fool. I miss you. I love you

My own cruel fate I can only hope

You gain understanding and can relate.



Artwork by Travis Naumann



Untitled

by Josh Garza

Two weeks I get out I don't know if I'm ready for this. I've been stuck here eight months. I only been out 72 days in all of 2016. Am I gonna go to the program or take off? I tell myself yes, but then I tell myself no. Dumb bitch caught me a new charge. She's poison but I love her to death. Boo, I want that booty relapse. It might happen. I don't wanna come back, but I have a feeling I will—IDK.

It brought back old memories when I used to go out everyday when I was young and shoot hoops from sun up to sundown. I was so innocent back then. I didn't know anything. I never thought I would be in the situation I am in today.

Selfishly Destructive

By E. Robles

Hiding to take one more hit or score on DL
Next thought after everything I do revolves around dope
On the outside my life looks calm and sober
This secret chaos
As I get more compliments and positive words
I fall deeper into my addiction and deeper into self destruction and sabotage
Life is falling into place
And
I throw a curve ball just to spice it up
Is my sarcastic way of putting in sabotage
“I got this” is far from the truth
I don’t have my sobriety in the bag
Hell no, but I wish I did
I need help my biggest trigger and downfall is
Myself, alone
They say who’d you get high with
My sarcastic way says “Me, myself, and I” with a fake smile
But it’s not funny
I am my own worst enemy
And all I want is to stop being
So self destructive
And be myself
Once I figure out
Who I really am

My Addiction

by Brittney S.

Heroin and methamphetamine,
You took everything from me...
And every single dream.
Now look where I sit,
I can't believe I chose this life
Over my freedom...
Just to be lit.
You took me from my family,
You took me from my friends...
You wanted to completely take
Me,
Until my life finally ends.
I don't understand why you always
Win...
You drag me down as low as I
Can go,
And that's how it's always been.
But from here on out,
I'm taking my life back...
I refuse to let the devil win,
And make me use that sack.
So sorry to say this
But I'm saying goodbye...
Because now it's time for me to
Finally spread my wings and fly!!!

Total



Perfect Just Perfect

by Tara Watkins

I am such a beautiful person

I come from south side San Jose from my hood—the crime zone
with so much experience in drinking Dr. Pepper perfect just perfect.

I would want my daughter Kiley to say whom I have named her after
Her dad, my baby's daddy Kiel Newton, who also I would want to say
perfect just perfect.

I want to put force, as my mom would say, with my boyfriend the
man I O Rodney Jameo perfect just perfect.

As they say, I have my great great grandma into wishing her middle
name to Raquel perfect just perfect

==



My Inner
Self

Shaggy

My Head was Hit

by Andrew H.

We liked playing tag, hide and seek

I don't remember

I got my lid split

My head, I got my head busted

Damn, it freakin hurt!

I don't remember too much.

Can't wait to get out of here.

I don't know what else to say.

I think I'm finished.

Cut.

I'm done.

I have nothing else to say.

Who's out there?

Uhm.

I think Thomas has something to say.

This is Who I Am

by Michael A. Keith

Born into a Catholic-Protestant family of 8; 3 girls & 5 boys. Raised Catholic and attended Catholic school from grade 1 to 3. A deadly misfortune took the life of a young girl - an accidental hanging on a bunk bed. This misfortune resulted in the lack of communication of a loving family. Father attempted suicide, mother had a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized. The children were placed in different foster homes. I spent 10 years in foster care, age 8 - 18. Some homes were nice, some not so nice; my siblings and I experienced beatings, verbal abuse, bigotry towards Catholicism, sexual abuse, theft and loss of personal belongings and gifts. This resulted in myself and siblings being damaged in ways that severely impacted our lives.

I decided early in life to join the military service. I joined the civil air patrol (Air force auxiliary org) at the age of 13. Upon graduating high school I enlisted in the U.S army. I was offered prep school for west point. I declined due to lack of confidence. I trained as an artillery repairman—the repair of Artillery (Guns) and missile launchers. I was an honor graduate. I served 3 Years in the U.S and Germany. I ended up taking a direct assignment into the National Guard, where I served 20 years. Infantry, combat engineer and armory.

I attended college and earned an AS and BS degree in manufacturing. While in college I held leadership positions in campus organizations and held a position on the student senate. I directed my education to prepare me for employment in the aerospace/defense industry.

I was employed by various defense companies in the design, manufacture and testing of guns, countermeasures, pyrotechnics, initiators, cartridge activated devices and less lethal ammunition. Over 34 years I acquired a technical library of over 1,000 volumes & countless drawings.

My character was influenced by family, religion, military, education, foster home, work and life experiences. These traits and skills allowed me to be productive and allowed me to start my own business, which I operated for 23 years.

I brought less lethal kinetic impact munition to law enforcement & military. MY design and testing methods (Anthro mosphic, 3 rib test dummies) became industry standard.

I married at age 41 largely due to the scars of the foster home period and impaired health. My wife birthed 3 sons . We divorced at age 51, primarily due to business stress, and lack of effective communication and limited family time.

I spent 9 years in litigation, regulatory compliance and landlord issues. These took an inordinate amount of time an effort to satisfy all the various government agencies. The lost time, money & effort resulted in the rapid decline of my business. Which ended with the forced move of my business assets by the landlord.

I followed federal law & regulations not knowing their were California laws that can be misconstrued or misapplied by a changing authority. This resulted in my conviction and 4 year sentence and I wait patiently for my appeal to be heard, so that I can see my family and son again. So this is who I am, a product of family, religion, foster care, military service, education and 32 years worst experience in my chosen field. I am described as honest, good-hearted, inventive, a loving father, and a hard worker.

Beautiful Disaster

by KT Russell

The person that I'm talking about is me, Katherine Russell. A very beautiful woman that has so much potential but chooses to stay hidden. Behind the scars and the piercings, she is very intelligent and smart. Why is it so hard to see the true beauty? The freckles that my dad once called angel kisses and the ballerina bun that will never change. My big brown eyes that have so much to see but have seen so much. When will I accept and realize that I am worthy and I am beautiful? It's never too late for change.

BEAUTIFUL

Who I am

by Leticia R. Gutierrez

I am the mother of 2, Zaven J. Quezada, my son & Kyesis Autumn Isabel, my daughter. I'm also a nana of 3, my grandbabies Isaias D. Quezada, the oldest, Ethaniel Quezada, the middle child & the youngest, my "papa's" Xerxes Jesse Jamez.

I come from a place where you speak up if you don't like something and told you're "spinning wheels" when you're not changing your lifestyle and acting your age.

I used to go to a place called sunset beach in Watsonville, CA. Just to escape and have fun, being a teenager is what I called it.

I've been to an ugly place called Valley State Prison Women. I landed there even though my mom, Isabel R. Gutierrez used to say drugs won't get you anywhere.

I'm going to a place one day where there's no pain or sorrow. The narrow path, which leads to heaven.

Sorry is Like Don't + Roll

by Brandie Jackson

Sorry is like Don't

Love is not like fear
Because fear is like insanity
Like stompin souls out
Under an oak tree because
Stephan is like a box that I
Can't get open
189-- Airline Highway is like
Fire where Paicines CA is.

Roll

Rocker was grey, now stay. Goodboy
Sit. High five! Good boy. Sugar bug?
Wheres my sugar bug? I love you.
To say good bye. Sigh...

My beloved
Mini Yorkie
Forever in love Rocker!

My Country How I See It

by Jose Zavala Lopez (aka G.I. Joe)

As I drew my picture, the assignment overwhelmed me. Then I just drew. I drew my parents as two nopales. I drew a huge tree in the middle representing this country and a bald eagle with sunglasses. Behind the eagle is a field, a road, and hills. My dad says we are here in the USA and my mom says yes old man. I tried to make each picture a representation of the assignment which is to draw my support system. Judging what I have drew, it seems like this country and my parents are my support system. I don't live in other countries but if I look at the labels of my clothes, various items and vehicles, they are made in other countries. So I have support in a way from other places in which I don't even live or know of.



Artwork by Beto

Dear God,
by Andrew Sosa

I know you're with me
You're in my mind and in my heart
Help me not to go where the devil resides.

There are wolves out here
And that's okay
If I stand behind you
I know you'll defend me.

I'm not strong enough to
Fight on my own, but one day
I will be. Until then I know
You'll protect me.
You're my God and I love you.

Jesus Christ is my lord and savior
The holy spirit my strength
And guide here on earth.

When you come, it will be with
Thunder and lightning
Hurricanes and tornados
And I know you are the lord
You have the power to open the
Earth
And the power to close it trapping
Within it all of it's evil
Including my own sinful nature

You are the hammer
You do not bend, and will not break
I know you can never be destroyed
You're my God and I love you
Thank you for this day
In Jesus name I pray
Amen

Who is She? My Autobiography Poem

by Shelly Ann Lind-Arvizo

"I am," Mother, Daughter, Girlfriend, and Woman.

"I wonder," When I will finally grow up.

"I hear," that Women get better with age.

"I see," myself growing old, and being happy.

"I am," Mother, Daughter, Girlfriend, and Woman!

"I pretend," I am happy, always smiling in front of others.

"I feel," the pain that I have caused myself and others

"I touch," my heart and think of those that I Love!

"I worry," that I have wasted too much time.

"I cry," at night and wish that I wasn't here.

"I pretend," I am happy, always smiling in front of others.

"I understand," why I am here and not at home with those that I Love.

"I say," that this is the Last time I come here!

"I dream," that I am someone better.

"I try," and try but still I can't stop!

"I am," Mother, Daughter, Girlfriend, and Woman.

"I will," continue to try and be the best of ALL of these that I can.

"I will," Love fiercely up until the very Bitter End!

Work



Encouragement

by Anonymous

Writing to write what's right
What's wrong? Think, look, act
Stop. Don't, Block.

Mind Right

by Liza Marie Gonzales

I had to leave that hoe alone to get
My mind right
I leave that hoe alone to get my mind
Right
I had to cash up on that check to get
My mind right
Cash up on that check to get my
Mind right
I had to focus on me to get my mind
Right
Give myself some time to get my mind
Right
I had to get booked in county to
Get my mind right
Now I'm doing some time to get my
Mind right
I had to link back up my
Family to get my mind right

Now shits right with my family
I gots my mind right
I had to get myself determined to
Get my mind right
Now I got determination to
Get my mind right
I had to see the real struggle to
Get my mind right
Strength threw my struggles keeps
My mind right
I got 10 more months in county
Til I can start my life on the
Outs right

[She] had to get back with her
Her dyke to get her mind right
Now [she's] back with her dyke
[She's] gots her mind right
Now I can proudly say I
Got this shit
And now my minds right

Always on my Mind

by Christopher Markert

Pain is forever in my heart
And always on my mind
Maybe it's from doing so much time
I'm not sure maybe one day
I'll be as free as a bird
From doing all this time
And to stop my life of crime

Acceptance

by Robert

Acceptance of my present estate of all of above mind, body and soul.

Acceptance that my own actions put me in this space and time.

Acceptance/realization that this process will continue to be the same and thinking otherwise is crazy.

I am my own structure yet I support many other nouns: places, people, things, and I am unable to influence or do anything for them because of my situation. Moreover my own actions have rendered me unable to help myself and others which causes a great deal of pain I, which I dwell everyday until I get another chance to make a difference.

The person I am today & am amalgamation of multiple situations, both good and bad. I can't really say I had a bad childhood, but poverty dictated a major role in our housing placement in school and potential acquaintances. I navigated through this sea of good and bad emerging on the current status the man I am today. I wouldn't change anything however, I would have chosen different decisions. I have a lot to be proud of and I still have a long way to go so in learning from my previous decisions I will enhance my current and future decisions with the hypothesis of a better outcome.

Behind Jail Walls

by P Locs (aka P. Levario)

Cell Living Sucks
Shout out to my niggas
Push, pull n striving!

When do we get sick of
This fucked up way
Of life?

Depending on loved <3 ones
To look out for us
In the lobby or at probation
Refilling our funds.

“Jail talk” speaks changed
& renewed minds until
We leave “Gate 9”

Maybe this time I’ll get it right
Grow up and live my life
No drugs or hurting my fam
I’ve gotta make them proud
Before it’s too late

Untitled

by Daniel Jimenez (aka Daddy)

Running away as far as possible from the loneliness and grief, sadness, anger, and emptiness that we feel we can't bear. It's the same as I feel in jail or being locked up. We have so much to look out for, to fear and that causes anger, sadness, loneliness—all the above—that sometimes we forget who we are. It hardens us to be someone or something we really aren't. Sometimes when it really comes down to it, I think we are all like little children just trying to fit in or, as some would say, getting in where we fit in.

Finding Meaning



Thankful

by Regalado

1. Thank you lord, for laying your hands upon my heart.
2. Just for being there for me when I felt like life was tearing me apart.

Blessing me with my son was only one of the gifts you've given to me.

You always were there even when I ran and didn't believe.

I promise to walk life with faith and no sight cause I know you have, and everything gonna be alright. There's no words I can even say. I know what I must do. Cause lord knows that my destination was written, you've always knew. When I thought it was the end, little did I know it was just the beginning. All you even wanted from me was just to stop sinning.

What Happened to Me
by Henry Soza III (aka Big J.R.)

From the puddle
Smiles hold no grief
Taking precautions to keep others
From walking.
I take a break A break from
My suicide note
Take a drag from my Camel
Crush
Who is the beast I dropped off
The balcony onto the sidewalk?
The one who jumped himself
In self-centeredness
The code switched with rhetorical power
Keeping so many dumbfounded.
I wasn't aiming to hurt, Anybody.
Kill them all let God sort them
Out
I am love, I am loyalty
But I am Angry and Alone
I know what it feels like to be
Left behind, but I always get back up
If I can be passionate about it
It may be worth my time
I've learned to be content with my
Life. do I live do I die.
Who is the judge? Not you, not I.
My soul always cries but
My eyes always dry

Let Light Shine Out of this Crazy Darkness

by Krystal Arballo

My life's not a disaster, it's just a beautiful mess.

So much chaos and destruction caused by one lost and so called lonely soul whom I shall just leave as nameless.

I take responsibility because I finally can admit that I'm the one creating this entire mess.

But yet through all this ugliness I'm finally the beauty of the woman that's been lost within my soul.

The brighter and shiny things in life are finally catching my attention, instead of all the darkness and destruction.

Most of all, my beautiful and broken soul is coming back together after the messy storm that changed this ugly world I call my own.

My past and deepest hurts somehow continue to haunt my life, making me into this crazy person I hardly seem to know.

But without these chapters in my life, there would be no "vida loca" story to tell.

I will continue to be this lost dark and lonely soul walking the earth; having no grip on the reality of what peace and happiness can turn out to really be.

I'm worth of so much more in life knowing that the light will always shine through out all the ugly darkness.

'Cuz in reality my life is not a disaster... It's truly just a beautiful mess.

Genie of Mine

by Ray I Gonzalez

“Hey’ hey, you startled one. You need not fear me hide or run. For I am your Genie from the emerald bottle you found here in the sand, and as you wiped the sand away you summoned me from my bottle this day.”

“Hey’ hey Genie of mine I thank god you found me in the nick of time. For I lost my path way.”

“Hey’ hey, you lost startled one. You need not worry or wonder any more, for thankful that I am. I grant you three wishes at your command, so command them and they shall be!”

“Hey’ hey wishful Genie of mine, I thank you kindly but I must decline. For I am on the greatest life quest of mine, and I lost one you could never find. So I only need directions back to my pathway at this moment in time.”

“Hey’ hey you foolish lost startled man I don’t think you quite truly fully understand what I really am. You see, I’m a great powerful wishful Genie able to grant you three worldly desires: fame, fortune, lust, or true love. Who and whatever your heart desires, in the lengths of a simple command, to command them so they shall be!”

“Hey’ hey great powerful Genie of mine, in that case I ask only for one wish at this time, for that one wish will encompass all things in life that there can be, even in the afterlife, whatever it offers me.”

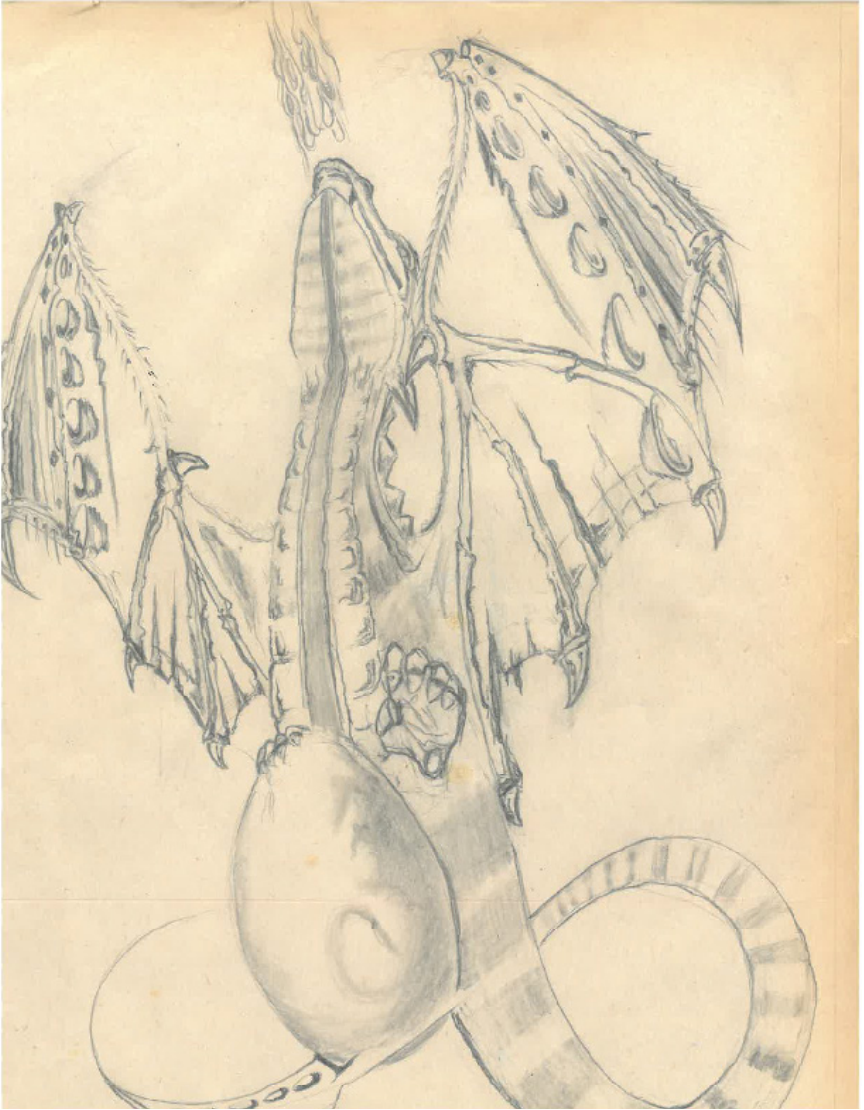
“Hey’ hey you silly foolish, lost startled man, now it is you which has me startled by what you command! For what can be in one and hold all three and even offers the afterlife for thee. So command it now so it shall be!”

“Hey’ hey you startled great powerful Genie of mine. My desire which simply at this time is to be a humble faithful servant of the lord for all awaits their for me.”

“Hey’ hey wise man, your wish be granted here and now, right where you stand! Now O Blessed one. What shall you do with the other two wishes I’ve offered you?”

“Hey’ hey you kind startled great powerful wishful Genie of mine. My second wish I offer to you, so if you wish Pagan Genie come to the lord with me. And thee, I give to any whom may hear me? So come on let’s go.”

In loving memory of my beloved sister Nora Gonzalez



**Dragon's Song "Motherhood"
for Samantha and Elizabeth**

by Michael N. Marshall (Cowboy)

“Understanding and compassion are not
for somebody else to cultivate”—From
*No Mud, No Lotus: The Art of Transforming
Suffering* by Thich Nhat Hanh

Self Cultivation

by Saige Freitas

No one else can make you do anything. You need to do it yourself and make sure you, and only you, are feeling it. Do things you want to do, not things people put into your mind. Your mind is for you to control. Forget what you’ve been taught. Remember what you’ve seen. If you’ve seen it with your own eyes, then you have proof. If you’ve only heard it with your ears, then you don’t know if it’s true. Take the feeling from your heart, not the thought from your brain. If you listen to everything you hear, your thoughts could be clouded by lies. Don’t let anyone but yourself cultivate the way you think.



What Happened to Me

by @CEAZSYRUP

I was born on October 5th 1992
I am the youngest child in my family
I started smoking marijuana at a young age
I got arrested at the age of 14
Ten years later I'm still sitting in jail
This will be the last chance I get
I have spent over 100,000
I have nothing to show for
Only thing I got is my 66 Mustang Cherry Red
Family is all I got
I will succeed
I am going to prove everybody wrong
Just sit back and watch
I'm going to make it to the top
See you there
One Love

Cheesecake, Ice Cream, Cupcake, Dill Dip



Who is Sam I Am

by Brandie Jackson

I do not like these bars
I do not like these scars

I do not like this room
I do not ride a broom

I do not like Sam I am

I do not have bail
I do not like this jail

I do not like these places
All the same faces

I do not like it Sam I am

Try it, you might like it, Sam I am

I do not have a choice
I do not have a voice

I do not like it

Sam I am.



Artwork by Patty L. Cain

Bandit Queen of India

by Anonymous

1. Pack of wolves hunted the elk
2. Swamp—they are desperate to lick and be licked
3. The wolves hunt the deer
4. They call me the wolf man
5. I can't give you the name

I'd like to thank my sisters and my brothers for their support.

Pack of wolves hunted the elk.

Spanglish was simple Spanish.

The Bandit Queen of India.

I can't give you the name.

I dreamed of your eyes.

Swamp—they are desperate to lick and be licked.

Alice





Unknown Friend

by Brandie Jackson

Unknown friend where have you been
Unknown face in heaven's place
Suffering and grace
Replaced by a smile and a wave goodbye
A rose dropped on a grave

She was so brave

From your unknown friend



Artwork by Jaxy Barajas Roa

Narrow Path

by Sophia Escobado

I feel sad because
My friend Alice has
Passed on.

One day we here the
Next day we're gone.

There is a narrow road
Waiting for all
Of us to take.

We must take that
Path there is no
Mistake.

God has made us
Just to be here
A while
He expects us to
One day see him
With a big ol smile.

I can see him with
His arms open
With lots of hugs
& kisses.

Just showing us how
Much we've
Been missed.

Now I cry, but I know she
Is in god's hands

Cause we're all in
God's Plans
On that Narrow Path



Artwork by Travis Naumann