



TRAFFICK SLAM
Poetry & Music Event
JUNE 22, 2017

TRAFFICK SLAM AWARD

Poem by Luisa Perez

This poem is written from the perspective of a young woman who is a survivor of human trafficking. She is able to overcome the emotional affects of her victimized past through her faith and encounter with Jesus Christ and thus truly experiencing victory, freedom and love that sheds light in her life again despite her dark and vulnerable past. This poem is also accompanied by an instrumental piece.

I was lost and alone,
Enclosed and abused

Suicidal thoughts,
Depressed and consumed

Longing for love,
But only rejected and used
Mistreated and bruised
All alone in that dark room...

My heart filled with pain,
No aid for an open wound
Oh, how I longed to see
A glimpse of hope in my view

Alas! He gently knocked
On the doors of my beaten heart
No longer felt alone
His light overcame the dark

The hope I so longed for
Came in with beautiful light
He picked me up from the floor
This was no longer my fight

He carries my broken pieces
I move forward in hand with Him
I no longer dwell in that dark room
I am no longer the victim

He is Jesus, my Redeemer
The one who consoles me
He is Jesus, my Deliverer
My Peace in this story

Jesus Christ saved me
from abuse of who tormented me
Chains of Hell forever broken!
Free from captivity!...

No more anxieties
No more insecurities
With He who walks with me
I fear not who is against me

See that was my my past,
The trafficking and the slavery
But God gave me the Victory
And this is my testimony.

HUMANITY AWARD

Humanity

by Nicole Bucci

Humanity, what comes to your mind when you think of this topic?
Do you think about the widows on the streets, being abused, wishing
someone would come and stop it?
Do you think of the 11 year old, working in a brothel all hours of the night?
the little boy, the same age as your Nephew who is taught to pick up his
weapon and fight?
That young man who should be studying, but is in the middle of a lake with
a fishing net in hand
Or the woman who has lost her children, husband and all of her land?
Rarely do they ever cross your mind
Because here in America, most everyone has gone completely blind
Listen to me;
Our world, is broken smashed into smithereens
If you take away anything from today, please let it be;
That we live in a world, of humans and no humanity
When we think of humanity in the Western world,
We think of school, boys and girls
Police men and the armed forces who embody what is right
The men and women working in the ER ungodly hours a night
Not often do we pay attention
To the lives and stories of people we call "slaves" we seldom do mention
My humanity, your humanity, we are humanity
The estimated 30 million people enslaved
These people, of their happiness are deprived
Of the little things I take for granted every day
The rising sun, my father's hands, my sisters face
Knowing that I here am always safe
Those Are simply dreams and luxuries
To my humanity in brothels and factories
Bricks, coffee, fish, clothing and sex
My humanity is out there, working with no rest
As I speak here before you, and do my best

Know its for my people, my humanity, for every human with a heart beating
in the chest.

It's Uncomfortable I know,
That this epidemic of Slavery still continues to grow
I hope years from now as I sit in my tiny house and watch snow

I can tell my children that the sex trade did once exist but now it is no more.
How I hope to oneday have my lap full of questioning grandchildren
"what was it like when you lived"

I lived in a time of slavery, I grew up in a world where there were boys and
girls

Being sold on every street corner of this beautiful world
That was the past, and the truth of the time
But you are safe forever, the world you live in is not mine

I cannot yet say that, so today I read you my rhyme
So that one day you can tell your children I was alive

When this was happened

Listen to me humanity

These people are like you and me

They want to write, draw, play and read

But what we wear and what we buy just disagrees

With their god given right, which is to be free

She made it. Working hard for .69 cents a day

All I did was pick out a dress and put up 69 dollars to pay

Little do I know, little do we know

where this green piece of paper, the American dollar will go.

Who it will effect, who will benefit?

Some of you may think

This is what makes the world turn,

The whips of the consumer, on slave's bare backs they burn

This is what makes the world go around?

The tiny fingers of children working in factory, making my cheap bathing
suits

Old Colombian coffee farmers dragging their feet in the remnants of work
boots

To make cents a day

For their hard work, the middle man we pay

But our humanity goes deeper than the middle man
I see people and a humanity that can
I see police officers, the ones I think about
Arresting slave owners, and pimps of little girls who are in a hotel hideout,
I see the armed forces of my country
Working so hard and protecting America the lovely
I see the girls who once worked as sex slaves
I can see it now, I can see the day
That these women will become The mothers, the wives, the sisters that they
are
This is not a dream, It is not that far
If we all saved one
You would be surprised what we could get done
If we stopped supporting slave labor
And to our humanity, gave a hand and a favor
Came together
Stood together
Proved to our humanity
That we are a family
Everyone will feel and know their worth
In trade for all of their hurt
For all the men on lakes
For the girls that are being prostituted, who can't take breaks
For all of the farmers who get no money for their feet and back aches-
To the girls who are being told, "You are worth your body, Nothing else you
will be"
God says he's not done with his work Until all are free

COURAGE AWARD

You are who you are!
by Rouwaida Nitiema

We walk around day to day,
Masking fear and sorrow under a smile.
Society tells us who to be and what to say.
But can we handle it, even for a while?

Fingers point in every direction,
Mortifying those who don't comply.
Images coax us toward physical perfection,
Changing people in the blink of an eye.

Should we worry about what others think?
We are unique and impossible to replace.
Instead of being manipulated by the world to blink,
Be yourself and prevent your originality from being misplaced.

MISSION AWARD

Sleeping
by Syreeta Washington

Are you woke?

How can you be if you don't open your eyes
If you don't see what's right in front of you
If you don't hear her silent cries
Nope. You ain't woke
You really can't see
That all she wanted was
A home with warmth and a loving family
Wake up!
And see
That she won't look you in your eyes
Afraid that you might see how she's been traumatized
All it takes is a look
A willingness to go beyond yourself
Eye contact to communicate
that you're not like everyone else
A look that says that says
I see you
As a human being
I see you
and I know you want to be seen
Not judged, not stigmatized, stereotyped or victimized
but as someone who has A story to tell powerful words Of a warrior and a
rebel
So I will wake up and see you
For who you are
I am conscious
I am woke
I am asleep no more

MISSION AWARD

True Religion
by Hannah Jackson

True Religion
She Judas kisses her man
To mark him as her very own.
And without fail
He breaks her down
And She goes the way of Judas.

So I guess that makes him Jesus.
Maybe that's why, when Tati enters the room,
she falls on her knees
and when we whisper
Girl, he's preying on you
She smirks, condescending, and answers
No, I'm praying to him

He has hair made of wool, bronze skin and open arms
when he turns the tables and chases her like a Pharisee:
And she says to me
I just need to serve him more faithfully.

He loves her, she claims that's why he always comes back
Like the second coming, he's back.
Like Revelations, he's back,
Riding a donkey of remorse
And she lays down palm trees for him
opens her arms cries
"Hosanna!"

How can she fail to notice her own crucifixion?

"He gave me his only begotten son" she says, "and no one else."
But I hear he's got at least 12 more disciples just like her
Says he doesn't
But I know the Devil is a liar.

He makes her call him Daddy
When he touches her
I imagine when she chants, it sounds like prayer:
our father, our father, our father

Tatiana and I called, texted, carrier pigeoned, message-in-a-bottled
Two-way confessional'd for years
But she stopped talking to me at school because he told her not to

Made her wear his big shapeless sweaters that swallowed Tati whole
And marked his sheep out to other wolves

I tried to be where she was
Knew she needed help, but not how to give it.
She said their relationship was something I didn't understand
True religion

The cakey powder of concealer that she left on my clothes when she'd hug
me hello
exposed just how much his fist knoweth the arc of her eye

I want to end this blasphemy
so I Judas kiss Tatiana
To mark her as my very own.
And without fail, she breaks me down
She looks at me and hisses

1 week later, he tears her arm, stomach and face apart
clean off the bone
like a lion fed christian
and she cries enough tears on my shoulder
to lift and carry Noah's ark

HOPE AWARD

HOPE
by Leverett Ladies

HOPE

Is the essence,
the life-force that
compels us forward.

It is not practical, logical,
mathematical, scientifically
probable or quantifiable.

It is mental, emotional,
physiological, and changes
the bio-chemical responses
of a human being.

It is essential for infants to
thrive. Without it, they die.

Hope is proof of the Higher.

#snapshotlessons

DIVERSITY AWARD

Poem by Rosemary McGovern

I was afraid.
What should I have done?
I saw one hand - just one - extended to me.
I had only one offer.
Oh, and it came at exactly the right time!
This must be it !!
This MUST be the answer!!!
Oh, finally, a way to make everything OK.

I met with my new friend, who would show me the way.
I have heard of others who left.
They must be doing wonderfully!
Otherwise, they would have returned.
I wish that I would have heard from them.
I wish that I had heard some news about them.
I might have been able to prepare myself when I received such an offer !

We soon were joined with others.
We were going to work!
We going to meet new friends!
We were going to make money!
Some were getting married.
Some were joining the Army.
Some were even going to be famous!
I remember one now ..

That one that never met you.
You didn't know me.
For some reason you cared.
For some reason you thought of others that were lost, that were scared.
You shined the light into the darkness.
You came for me.
You restored me.
I am not afraid.

HONORABLE MENTION

My Empty Choir Seat
by Ellen Williams

My empty eyes look back at me from the dirt covered mirror
In this motel of my captivity
I can no longer see who I am, who I once was
The mirror is filthy
I am filthy from the clawing hands of my traffickers
Their hands have choked my throat
Choking away any sound from me, the song from me

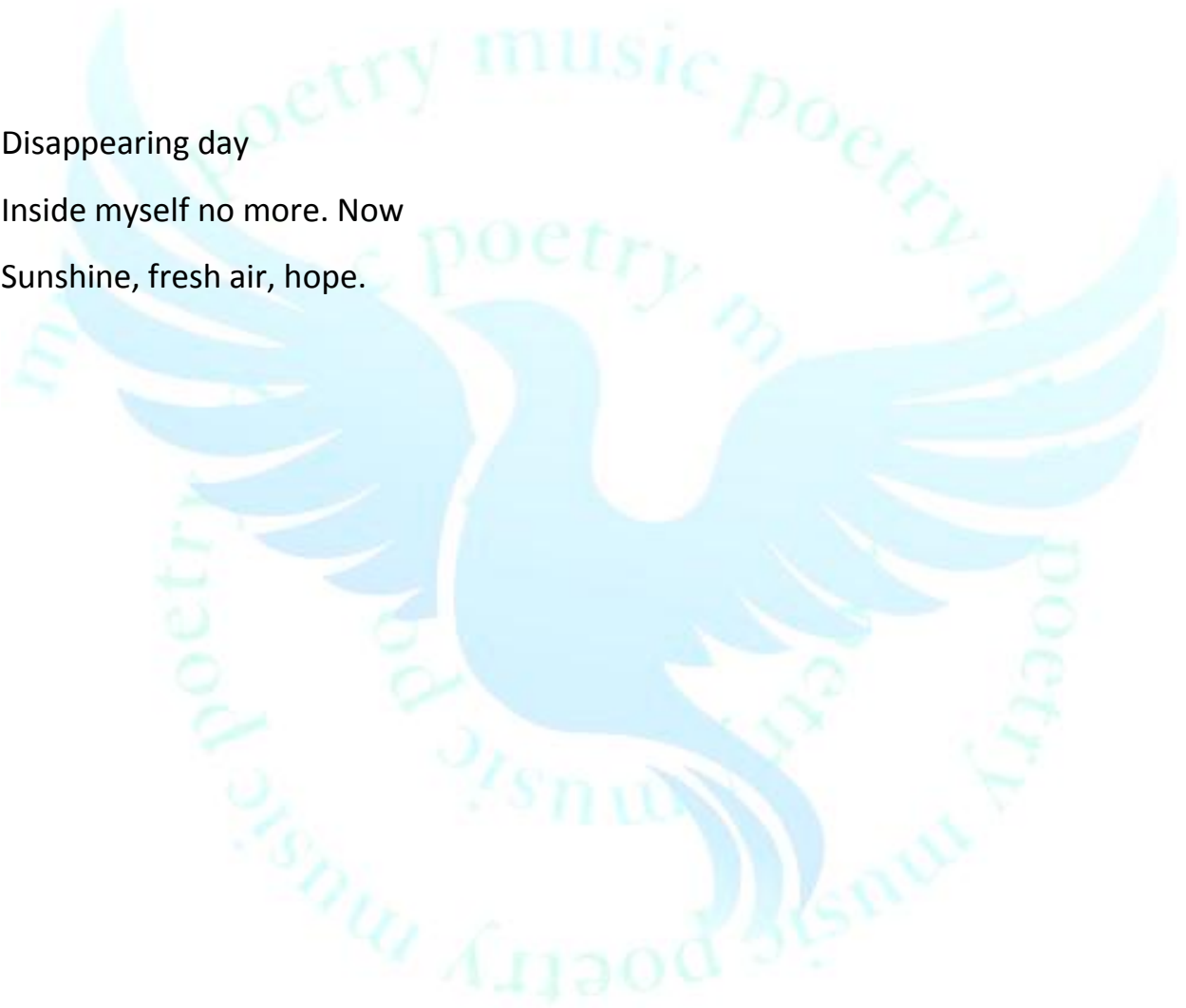
I used to sing in my church choir
But I have been pulled from heaven's loft to this daily hell
By savages intent on destroying me, destroying my soul

My choir seat is empty now
But do not remove it
For the music of my soul is faint, but not dead
God, please do not tire of looking for me
Are you nearing close ? Can you find me?

HONORABLE MENTION

Theresa – a Haiku
by Patti Pfeiffer

Disappearing day
Inside myself no more. Now
Sunshine, fresh air, hope.



HONORABLE MENTION

To Be
by Mary Ann C. Fusco

Infinite of infinite being,
Past and present, future seeing.

I was, I am, what shall I be?
I am my own identity.

In one sense *is* means *equal to*.
So how is it I'm less than you?

Your force, your fraud, your cruel coercion
Debase my being, demand exertion.


To be betokens bright existence,
Stirs the soul, sparks resistance.

Unmolested let me be!
I breathe, I hope. I will be free.

HONORABLE MENTION

We Will
by Laura Foley

We will be a light for those who live in darkness.
A friend for those who have none.
A shelter for those who are abused, sold, and discarded.
We will shield you from the blows, and give back your soul.
We will have compassion and understanding when it seems like there is none.
We will not turn a blind eye towards you, no profit made from your suffering.
And through the tough times, we will stand as one!
Our voices crying out, you are not alone anymore!
Together, we will rise victorious!



Til You're Alright
by Wincey Terry-Bryant

There are people to whom you mean so much
that of their own volition
decided you're important enough
To form a coalition

though you may never know our names
Our every other thought is you
Your freedom is the driving force
behind everything we do

Whether hidden in a dungeon
or somewhere in plain sight
Know that somewhere you have friends
who won't rest til you're alright



True Love
by Susan Panzica

In a town
not far away,
there lived a girl
who loved to play.

A boy asked, "Do you love me?"
She said, "You know I do."
He said, "If you do this,
I'll know your love is true."

Days were black
Full of despair
Afraid to dream
Or say a prayer

And then one day
She found a soap
Called a number
Renewed hope

A rescue crash
Then blinding light
Arose within
Her will to fight

A kindly face
A welcome meal
Her journey starts
Begins to heal

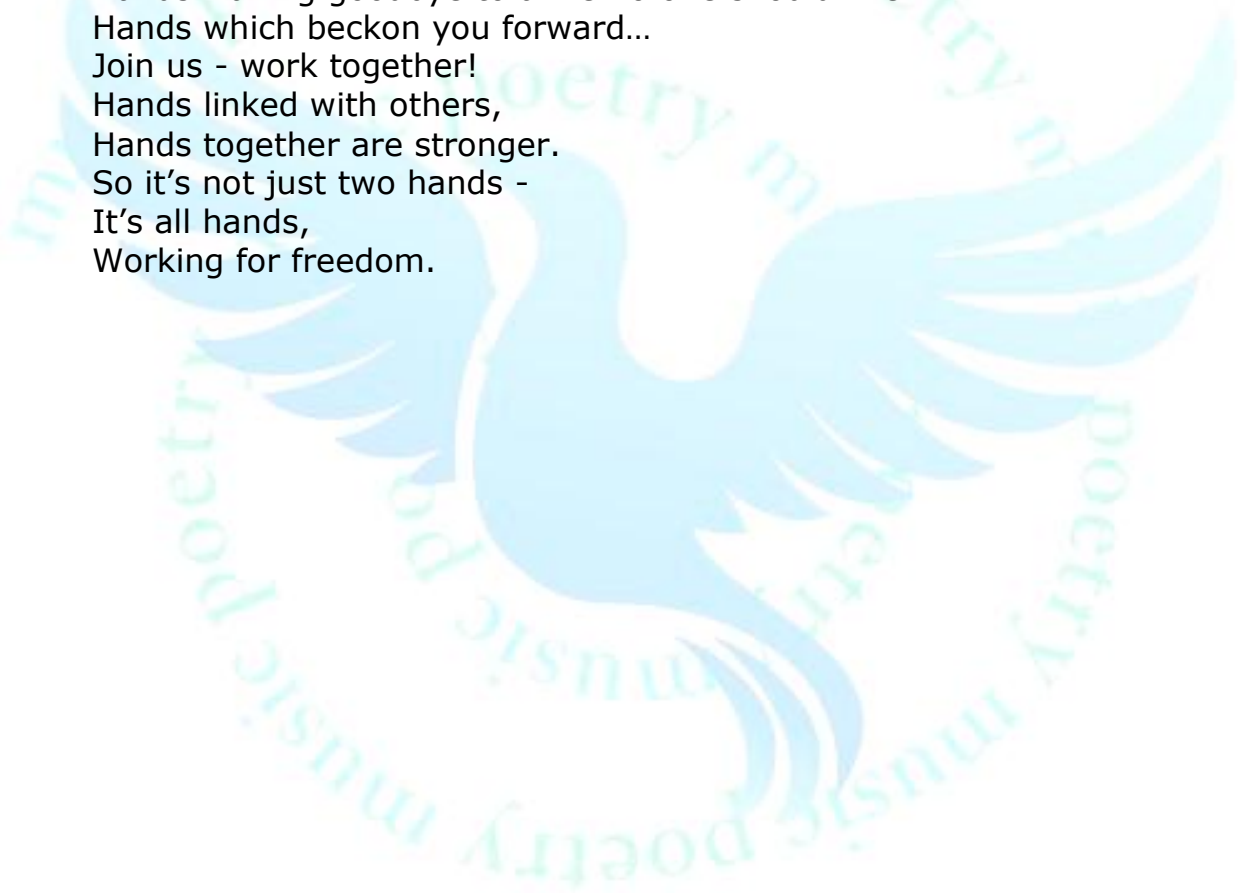
The nights are now
Not filled with dread
In warmth and peace
She lays her head

And if he says, "you'll do this
So I know your love is true."
She'll say, "If you loved me,
You wouldn't ask me to."

From earth below
To stars above
She finally knows
What is true love

Hands
by Kate Lee

Just two hands?
They might be busy hands -
Carrying, lifting, caring hands
Reaching out, supportive hands.
Hands which say: "Stop!"
Hands saying: "Enough!"
Hands waving for help,
Hands waving goodbye to a life no one should live.
Hands which beckon you forward...
Join us - work together!
Hands linked with others,
Hands together are stronger.
So it's not just two hands -
It's all hands,
Working for freedom.



Can I dream to be free?
by Susan Neigher

Darkness, dankness, mold and sweat;
I wake up exhausted, dreading his bad mood.
In a strange city, my needs never met.
Weak and hungry, i am sent out to find food.

The streets smell of exhaust fumes
The stench burns my eyes.
As I walk, dark and cold buildings loom.
I condemn the day I believed my "boyfriend's" lies.

I see a pathetic bush by the stoop up ahead.
As I walk closer there are flowers struggling to bloom.
They look bleached out, trying to be red,
But they just can't muster the power and are doomed.

Wait! The flowers aren't red but are lavender in fact.
In the filth, a lilac bush has managed to survive.
Its sweet smell gently brings me back
To times when I truly felt alive.

Can I be like these flowers
And quietly but defiantly bloom?
Can I resist the toxic showers
And send out a sweet fragrance despite the gloom?

Do I dare send out a text
Or will I be beaten down if I try to flee?
The flowers tell me what to do next;
Take my phone and text to Be Free.

Poem by Virginia Lyttle

I can't thank you yet.
It all happened too fast.
The police badges, the shouting.
I was told I was free.
Where do I go?
What do I do?
I don't feel free.

Oh God – where are you?
I used to pray.
I used to believe.
If I die will you find me?

I was told I could help.
Write a check
Hand out soaps
Talk to people of the horror.
It doesn't feel like much.

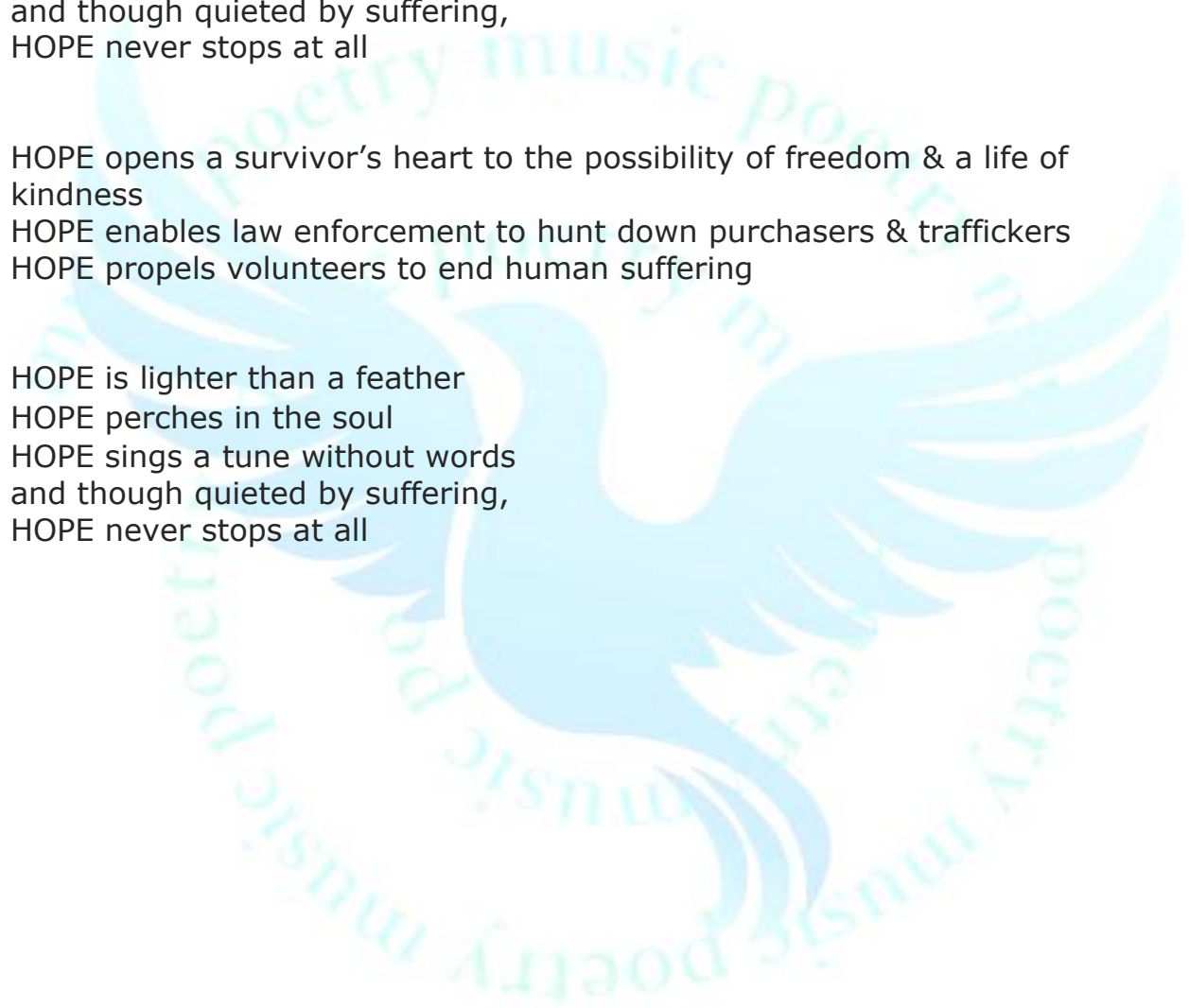
I am alone for a minute.
Taking a bath
Combing my hair
Covering my bruises.
It's raining hard so I'm not on the street.
I'm waiting for a call.
I hope he's nice
That he'll be quick.
I'm tired, I'm hungry
I hurt.
I'm afraid.

There Must be HOPE
by Patricia Devine-Harms
with words/inspiration from Emily Dickinson

HOPE is lighter than a feather
HOPE perches in the soul
HOPE sings a tune without words
and though quieted by suffering,
HOPE never stops at all

HOPE opens a survivor's heart to the possibility of freedom & a life of kindness
HOPE enables law enforcement to hunt down purchasers & traffickers
HOPE propels volunteers to end human suffering

HOPE is lighter than a feather
HOPE perches in the soul
HOPE sings a tune without words
and though quieted by suffering,
HOPE never stops at all



Poem by Tejal Vora

I faintly remember the voices
My anklets, Ammi's (mother's) bracelets
The animals in the yard - the goats, Mani the cow and the chickens were my
favorite!

But now, all I hear are the noises
All was interrupted - i hear the screams
the crashing of my dreams
The deafening silence
Suddenly overcome with darkness
So far, so deep, so filled with malice

It is all behind me now
I am safe, back in the sunlight - an angel showed me how
As she was for me, I must be now
My experiences have broken me
But my anger won't let me be
How can I stand by and see
And allow what they did to me
We must stamp out salvery
Put an end to someone's misery
It will be a long fight
.....But she is suffering with no end in sight
Weary, broken, lonely barely holding on to her might
SHE IS WAITING
For US, our Coalition Against Human Trafficking!

I am free
by Diana Starace

your light draws me in
like fireflies in the summer night
leaving behind
shadows of myself
in the deep darkness

the harsh memories remain
in the creases of my mind
as the hurt
and the shame
fade away-
slowly

you grabbed my hand
my heart
a life-saving moment
a rescue of sorts

I will heal
I am strong
like the wheat in the wind
I will not break
but bend

all because of you
I thank *you*
my dear friend

Poem by Louise Murray

Dedicated to survivors of human trafficking:

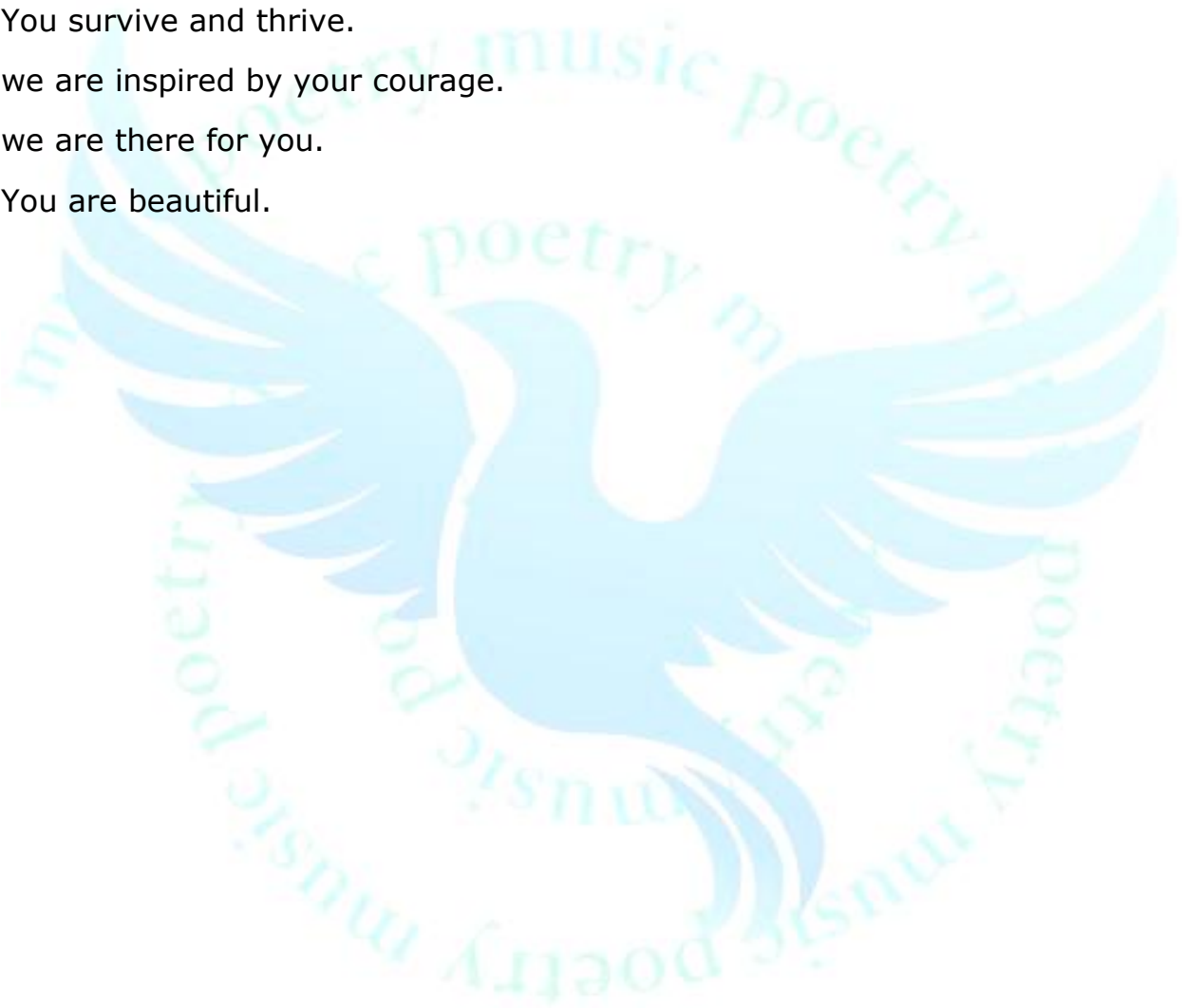
You are beautiful.

You survive and thrive.

we are inspired by your courage.

we are there for you.

You are beautiful.



a Haiku poem:
by Susan J. Waldman

OVERWHELMED BY MY COMMITMENTS...

DEPRESSING TIMES...

STILL I CAN'T SAY NO

