

Not Beyond Hope



Hope: the desire and search for a future good, difficult but not impossible to attain.

Thoughts and artwork presented
by the inmates of the South Bay
House of Correction

Till Death Do Us Part

By Lawrence Caruso

“So now little man, you’ve grown tired of grass,
L.S.D., goofball, cocaine, and hash.”
And someone pretending to be a true friend said,
“I’ll introduce you to Miss Heroin.”
“Well honey, before you start fooling with me,
Just let me inform you of how it will be.
For I will seduce you and make you my slave,
I’ve sent men much stronger than you to their graves.
You think you could never become a disgrace,
And end up addicted to poppy seed waste,
So you’ll start inhaling me one afternoon,
You’ll take me into your arms very soon,
And once I have entered deep down in your veins,
The craving will nearly drive you insane.
You’ll need lots of money, as you have been told,
For Darling, I’m much more expensive than gold.
You’ll swindle your mother and just for a buck,
You’ll turn into something vile and corrupt.
You’ll mug and you’ll steal for my narcotic charm,
And feel contentment when I’m in your arms.
The day when you realize the monster you’ve grown,
You’ll solemnly promise to leave me alone.
If you think that you’ve got the mystical knack,
Then Sweetie, just try getting me off your back.
The vomit, the cramps, your gut tied in a knot,
The jangling nerves screaming for just one more shot,
The hot chills, the cold sweat, the withdrawal pains,
Can only be saved by my little white grains.
There’s no other way and there’s no need to look,
For deep down inside you will know you are hooked.
You’ll desperately run to the pusher and then,
You’ll welcome me into your arms once again.
And when you return just as I have foretold,
I know that you’ll give me your body and soul.
You’ll give up your morals, your conscience, your heart,
And you will be mine until Death Do Us Part.”



The Little Girl Locked Inside
By Linda Hattenburg

I made a decision to look at me,
Not realizing the truth is what I'd see.

I thought I was mean and thought I was bad,
When really deep down I was crying and sad.

There's a little girl, way down inside,
She's afraid to come out, she continues to hide.

The pain is too much; she can't bear to feel,
She asks for God's help and He makes her a
deal.

Be good to yourself and you will heal,
Be honest with you and you'll definitely feel.

The truth sometimes hurts and we think we're
alone,
We are willing to see so we don't turn to stone.

I know in my heart there's a better side to me,
Yes, I've taken that look, today I am free!



I Do
By Liston Callwood

When I first met you, you meant
Everything to me, I admired your scent.
My God you were sexy,
Every second that passed and each day that went by,
The time spent together all we did was get high.
You stimulated my body, made me feel at ease.
The more I had the better, the less was a tease.
Loving you has been hell, in truth a sin,
I still cared for you, again and again.
Thanks for the heartache, thanks for the pain,
Self-destruction and misery is all that I've gained.
I'm sorry if you're hurt, this much is true:
But I need to remain sober, "I Do," "I Do!"

Despite and Still
By Tamora Johnson

Have you not read
The words in my head,
And I made part
Of your own heart?

We have been such as drawing
The losing straw-
You of your gentleness
I of my rashness,
Both of despair-

Yet still we share
This happy will:
To love despite and still.

Never let us deny
The thing of necessity,
But O, refuse
To choose
Where chance may seem to give
Love an alternative.

Holes In My Life

By Stylisha Johnson
In a letter to Tamora Johnson

In and out,
I never knew what you was all about.
You say you'll change,
But that ain't true,
Yeah you'll change when the moon is blue.
As a little girl growing up,
I believed you when you said you loved me so much.
My dad said it was true,
My heart said it was wrong,
I kept it to myself and didn't tell you,
I believed your sad songs.
Yeah my dad told me
What he thought you was up to,
But I let my pride blind me from the truth.
In and out,
In and out,
My life has so many holes.
Each hole has a its own story,
And if you're in it nobody knows.
Don't get me wrong,
This isn't meant for you to cry,
It's just that I had enough.
I love you a lot,
But my life has been tough.
All in all I'll pray for you,
And hope you change all you do.
I don't want to hurt you,
But you need to know,
Now I can let everything on my chest go.
Let's start fresh so I don't have to finish the rest.



Drawing by Amy Hughs

6x6 Foot Cell
By Marie Healy

This is where I dwell,
In my 6x6 foot cell.
All because I am addicted,
Just waiting to be convicted.

My mother cried out tears of fear,
That's why the judge has sent me here.
A brother, a sister, I love so much,
A lovely family I yearn to touch.
I'll get better they heard me say,
And every time I ran away.

It came down to locked doors you see.
I couldn't stop using and that's why I'm not
free.

I've robbed, I steal, I cheat, I lie,
The only thing left is for me to die.

I did more dope to make me numb,
I thought I had friends who were really scum.
It gets worse, just open your ears,
I've survived my biggest fears.
Held at gunpoint was nothing you see,
Please pull the trigger; I won't have to be me.

I fell in love with my best friend,
Heroin is his name.
He almost took me out of the game.
He's given me Hepatitis C,
And who knows, maybe HIV.

Let me keep it real simple,
So you'll understand,
This drug wants me dead,
It's in command.
But it's all over now,
Prison has given me a taste,
Life is too short,
And too precious to waste.
I've had my share of misery,
Been through hell,
And I refuse to live my life,
In this 6x6 foot cell.

Through These Bars I See
By Shawna Goodin

Cars speed by and kites fly high,
Mothers push carriages as their children cry,
Flowers bloom with seasons change,
It's my fault, no one to blame.

The past is gone there is no doubt,
I see clearly now what my life's been about.
Focused on everything but what's inside,
I'm alone with myself, with no place to hide.

Look to the future is what I must do,
What God has in store for me, I haven't a clue.
I'll trust in His judgment, my life in His hand,
My new goal is to be the best person that I can.



Brother Tim
By Dorothy Ingemi

I walked up the stairs,
I looked in the door,
I wanted to go in,
But I just wasn't sure.

I looked in the casket and saw Tim inside.
It was hard to believe my brother had died.

But the things Timmy did were all pretty
funny,
He'd buy you a car and then steal all your
money,
Then he'd take your jewelry and steal your
rugs,
To sell them for money so he could get
drugs.

Tim did time in jail you know,
But he always got drugs, wherever he'd go.

Now Tim is dead and he is probably glad,
Cause he gained himself friends and he's up
there with Dad.

Tim must be watching as I'm writing this
poem,
Cause I have a strange feeling that I am just
not alone.

So if you're with me Tim,
I've got one thing to say,
You'll always be my brother,
And I hope you're okay.



The Plague
By Robert Jordan

Since the future's uncertain, my memories vague,
I've been abused by substances, the vicious plague.
Me and my habits: a marriage so savage it ravage,
That's why I travel light with my heavy
baggage.

Vacant eyes with blatant lies,
When peace of mind has vaporized on rapid decline to
demise.

I fraternize with misery; it never leaves me lonely,
For as alcohol's my alibi, drugs and I are
co-D's.

I'm searching for an interpretation, an
explanation,
To this preoccupation with self mutilation,
'cuz the situation's destination is
incarceration.

FACE IT... Our whole make up need a
face-lift,
So let us pray for serenity and God's graces.

I'm tired of regressing and second-guessing,
Addressing my child's questions of why I ain't learned
my lessons,
In this criminal profession,
Being the government's possession,
And worldwide rejection.

I got MAJOR anxiety in my inner thought diary,
Regarding sobriety 'cuz societies eying me and spying
me,
My own patience is trying me!

Why can't we be what we want to be?
Free from the demons haunting me,
Free from addiction taunting me,
Free from the lifestyle flaunting me.

Through all the high times and booze,
I was the user being used,
So DON'T confuse all that glitters to be
jewels.

TRUE INDEED!

We can fertilize our minds and plant seed
Regardless of race or creed,
Cocaine or weed,
Heroin or speed,
Violence or greed.
There's no gray area in between,
To reach our goals and live our dreams.

THIS HOUSE IS NOT OUR HOME!!!

These, these
Walls of steel and rationed meals,
With hateful stares from cell block tiers,
Living here with silent tears,
Where hope's impaired beyond repair,
Let's shift to another gear and move away from here,
So at least THIS shot we give ourselves is fair!

Perhaps the cycle of relapse can snap and collapse,
By knowing the bare facts,
And being aware that,
WE GOT CHOICES HERE.

Not designed for self decay,
At ANY cost, avoid the plague.



November, 2004

Dear Addiction,

I'm not even gonna ask you how you're doing because I already know how you get down. Besides, I could care less.

As you can see, I'm back in jail because of you. Once again you straight played me. You knew I was weak and going through a tough time, yet you had me rippin' and running the streetz for days, lying and scheming on people, cheatin', robbin' and stealin' and straight stuck on stupid over you. YOU TRULY DIDN'T CARE ABOUT ME YOU SELFISH STUPID SON OF A... I'm better than that now. I remember when I was getting high you promised that things would get better if I kept on using. Whenever I was going through drama with friends or family and feeling down, you saw to it that... Or should I say, you made yourself available to me in the worst way. You led me to believe that you would take good care of me. So I didn't pay my rent, I neglected all my responsibilities, and I hardly ate because I was always feeding you. Shhhit. I stayed broke and every time I did run into a few dollarz, it was you I was hittin' off. I must admit, you DO keep shit real. I mean, what's it been?... 10 maybe 12 years since I've known you. And after all those years, you're still the same selfish, noncaring disease today as you were 12 years ago. So I can only blame myself because I know you... I know you too well.

So with that said, I've finally come to the beautiful conclusion that you and I were NOT meant for each other. I'm not sorry to say, but I'm actually proud to say that I'm leaving you. Yeah, I found something else. No, you don't know anything about it but, in case you're wondering what it is... It's called RECOVERY. Yeah I know, I'll be running back to you huh? Only in a rerun. You see RECOVERY stands for everything you fall for. RECOVERY has shown me a better way of living. I don't have to lie, cheat, steal, rob, or any of that shit you had me doing. And as long as I stay true to it, RECOVERY promised to stay "TRUE" to me. In fact, RECOVERY guaranteed me a better life than you could ever give me. Yeah, I know this relationship is gonna be heard work, but nobody said life was easy... Except you, of course. And seeing how I'm no longer dealin' with you, your opinions, views and concepts no longer matter to me.

So in conclusion, I want you to know that, although I'm here, I'm much happier knowing that you're no longer a part of my life. NO! We had no good times together and trust me, I won't miss you.

No longer yours,
Rome'o Saladin

Untitled
By Tamora Johnson

I sit in this cell
In a place called South Bay.
I think about my family
Every single day.
I think about all
That I have done wrong.
I think about how
My freedom is gone.
I think about a lot
Of different things,
I most think about
How before I was here
I didn't think about anything.



The Way I See It
By Kimya Foist

There are times when I feel low and lost,
But I know I have to get up and be the boss.
Many days I am confused,
About which way of life or path I should choose.
One day I know my higher power will rescue me,
But until then I must deal with what I see.
I believe people should not judge one another,
But most times more than not they forget what they were taught by
their mothers.
I know I have many flaws to workout from within,
So far that I'll pray for my sins.
Sometimes I may also laugh, act silly, and play,
Because unlike others,
I can't let anger and frustration get me through the day.
At times life will put you in a rut,
But don't give up and let it get you stuck.
Believe I have my moments of grief,
But like taking baby steps I am learning to speak.
You can close your eyes and dream of a brighter day,
But people in general tend to deal with things in their own way.
I will never break down and call prison my home,
So to get an idea of how I think, I wrote this poem.
So for times I act like a clown,
It's because I couldn't, shouldn't and wouldn't,
Choose to let nothing and nobody keep me down.

How Do You Think I Feel?

By Robert James

I'm in jail,
Sitting on my bunk,
Staring out a window that's riddled with holes,
View obstructed by steel,
I'm hurtin' inside, not letting it show,
Just keepin' it real.
I'm still hungry, canteen's gone,
Just ate the county portioned meal,
Now I'm feeling like I got a raw deal.
So to God I will appeal.

But instead of appealing and complaining,
Maybe I should give thanks for the chance,
To be in the recovery unit with notebook pads,
Instead of a unit with inmates with shanks.

There will be a few people who are not serious,
But I'd like to think that most are real about their recovery.
This program is just what I needed,
So I know God still loves me.

God loves people skinny, fat, and tall,
It's fair to say that God loves us all.
To all my fellow inmates, none below or above me,
I want to wish you all the best. Good luck in your recovery.



“Therapeutic Community”

Mural located in the House of Correction recovery unit, drawn by past inmates to inspire future inmates.



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