

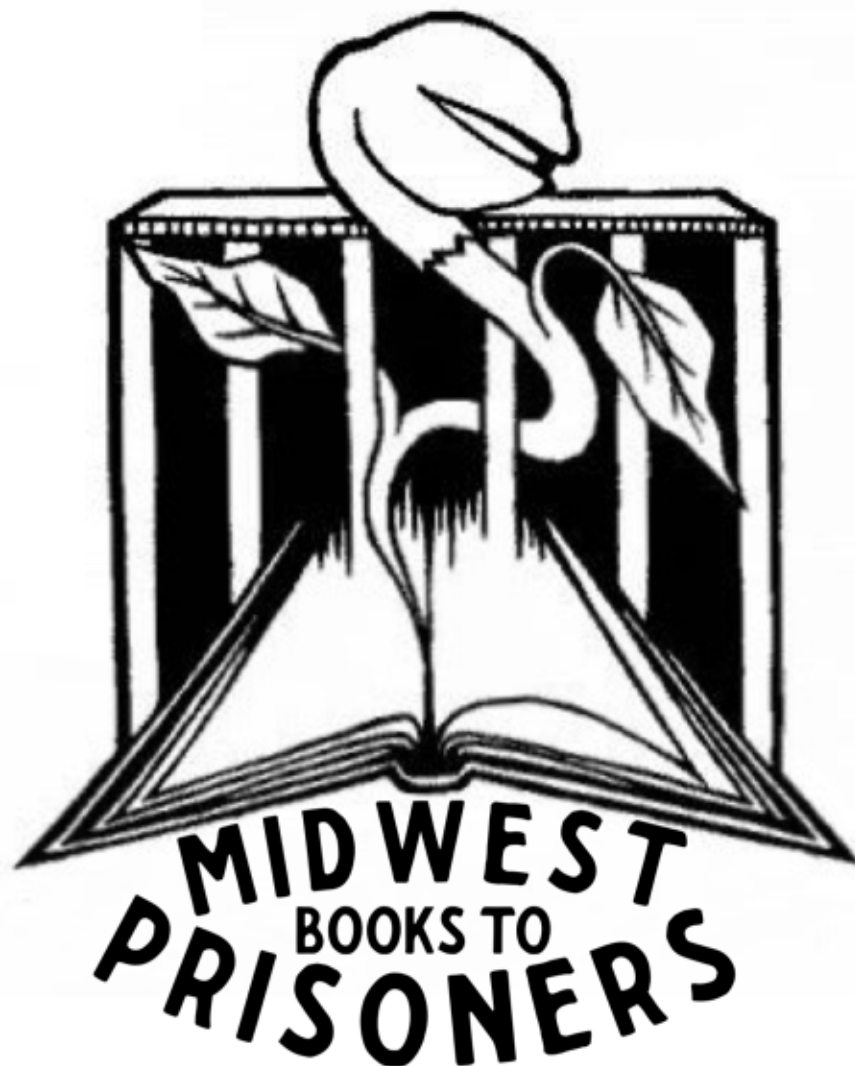
Midwest Books to Prisoners is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) not for profit organization based in Chicago. Since 2004 we have been accepting requests from any and all incarcerated people, and mailing them reading material that corresponds to their areas of interest free of charge.

If you or a loved one would like to request reading material, you can contact us via snail mail at

Midwest Books to Prisoners
1321 N. Milwaukee Ave
PMB #460
Chicago, IL 60622

or find us on the web at

www.MidwestBooksToPrisoners.org



COMMUNITY ZINE
VOLUME 1

Thank you to all the incarcerated people who made this zine possible by submitting their work, without them this would not exist.

We hope for a day when it will not need to.

Jonathan Summers
459083
Bellamy Creek
1727 W. Bluewater
Ionia, MI 48846

Gerardo Sanchez Amador
20190119062
P.O. Box 089002
Div. 9 - 3E - 3208
Chicago, IL 60608

Robert F. Covelli
A08307
2600 N. Brinton Ave.
Dixon, IL 60121

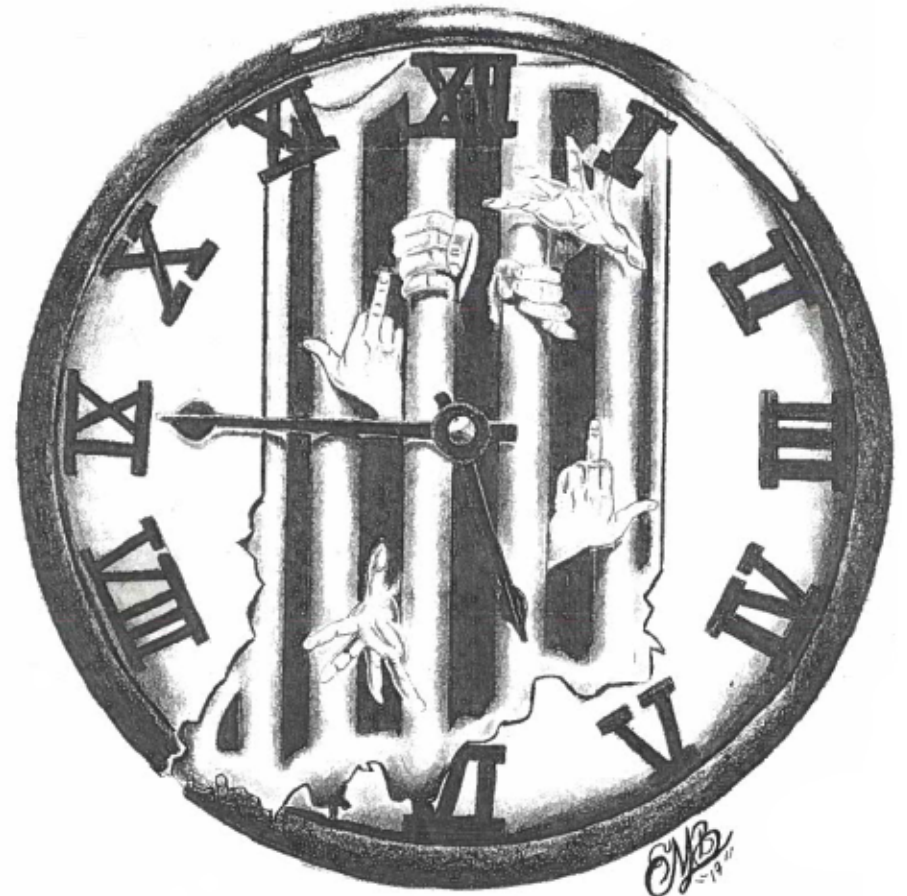
The editor of this zine has made every effort to present the selected works as they were submitted, minor edits have been made for clarity, but no content has been significantly altered.

Indiana: The Last Stronghold of the
Ku- Klux - Klans - Klan - Klan - Klan

Victor Brown
CC1/529809
P.O. Box 900
Portage, WI 53901

Stephen Brown
468393
P.O. Box 900
Columbia Correctional Institute
2925 Columbia Dr.
Portage, WI 53901

Darryl Allen
455525
London Correctional Institute
1580 State Rte. 56 S.W.
London, OH 43140



Clinton Troy Riley
New Castle Correctional Facility
New Castle, Indiana

PAJARO EN UNA JAULA

La pintura, Pájaro en una Jaula, por Pablo Picasso, es para mí como un rompecabezas. Todas las piezas están revueltas, y así es la vida.

Cuando yo miro las aves en el cielo, desde el patio de la cárcel, vuelan libres. Es muy triste para mí. A veces, el ser humano tiene al pájaro en una jaula. Pero ahora, yo me siento en una jaula y comprendo lo que han de sentir los pájaros en su jaula. La cárcel es una jaula muy grande. Cuando las aves del cielo vuelan libres y se acercan a la orilla de esta cárcel, han de decir: "Mira a esos seres-humanos en su jaula, ¡cómo las cosas están cambiando! Ahora, ellos están en la jaula, y nosotros estamos libres".

Nadie, ni un animal, tendría que vivir en una jaula. Estoy comprendiendo cómo los animales se sienten muy tristes por la necesidad de la libertad. Cuando el ser humano abre la puerta de sus jaulas para darles su comida, y se descuida por alguna razón, dejando la puerta abierta, cualquier animal cautivo aprovecharía esa oportunidad para escapar y ser libre. Ahora comprendo esa necesidad.

Dios creyó las aves para que anduvieran libres por el mundo. En el cielo y en la tierra, cada criatura debe tener derecho a ser libre, pero no es así y por eso, ando triste de lo que es mi vida. De pensar que las aves me pueden ver en mi jaula es triste. Quizás

WRITE TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Several of our talented contributors included their mailing addresses with their submissions. If you loved their work, please thank them personally by sending them a letter or putting some money on their books.

David Richards
65434060
FCI Elkton
P.O. Box 10
Lisbon, Ohio 44432

Clinton Troy Riley
111204
New Castle Correctional Facility
1000 Van Nuys Rd.
New Castle, IN 47362

SUPPORT MIDWEST BOOKS TO PRISONERS

FUNDING: By donating just a few dollars, you can help pay for postage costs which allow us to continue to provide books and other print media to the incarcerated people we serve, free of charge. Find donation information on our website, www.MidwestBooksToPrisoners.org.

DONATING: We accept textbooks, novels, scientific journals, nonfiction books, religious texts, magazines, educational materials, art books, poetry and essay collections, and many other reading materials. Unfortunately, we cannot use any books that are spiral bound.

If you have books you would like to donate, please drop them off at the Community Center door at

First Trinity Lutheran Church
643 W. 31st Street
Chicago, Illinois
60608

Please note: we do not send or accept materials which advocate hatred towards people on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation.

VOLUNTEERING: We are an all-volunteer organization and are always looking for more help! Find out about volunteer opportunities on our website, www.MidwestBooksToPrisoners.org

alguna vez ellos fueron prisioneros de alguna jaula también, y es lo que Pablo Picasso representa en su pintura.

*Gerardo Sanchez Amador
Cook County Jail, Chicago*

The painting, *The Bird Cage*, by Pablo Picasso, is like a puzzle for me. All the pieces are mixed up, and that is how life is.

When I look at the birds in the sky, from the jail's patio, they fly freely. It is sad for me. Sometimes, human beings keep birds in a cage. But now, I am the one in the cage and I understand what such caged birds must feel. The jail is a big cage. When the birds fly in the sky above and they approach the edge of the jail, they must say: "Look at those people in the cage, oh how things have changed! Now they are in cage, and we are the free ones".

No one, not even an animal, should be kept in a cage. I am understanding how caged animals must feel sad, needing their freedom. When a person opens the door to their cages to feed them, and accidentally leaves the door open for a moment, any caged animal would take that opportunity to escape and be free.

Now I understand this need.

God created birds to fly freely through the world. In the sky, and on land, every creature should have the right to be free, but it isn't like this and that is why I feel sad about my life. Thinking of the free birds looking down and watching me is sad. Perhaps once, they were prisoners in some cage too. This is what Pablo Picasso represents in his painting.

Translation courtesy of La Maestra Michelle



POEM WHISPERER

I, a poem whisperer,
coax verse[s] out of a
jumble of letters.
Doing it [s]neakily is-
adding a quote,
a crazed noun with a
lying verb.

—David Richards
FCI Elkton
Lisbon, Ohio

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This is a "Scrabble Poem," written using the tiles from a Scrabble game only once each. (The square letters are the blanks).

HAIKU : 3,4,5

1

While that smile covers your face
I can still see the
Shadows that cloud your eyes

2

You don't fool me we
Don't know how transparent
Your true feelings are

3

What are we but light
And fragments of energy
Stuck together here

—*May Meridian*

A TYPE OF FREE

Barbed wire and gun towers,
Emotional walls now replaced
By those of concrete and stove

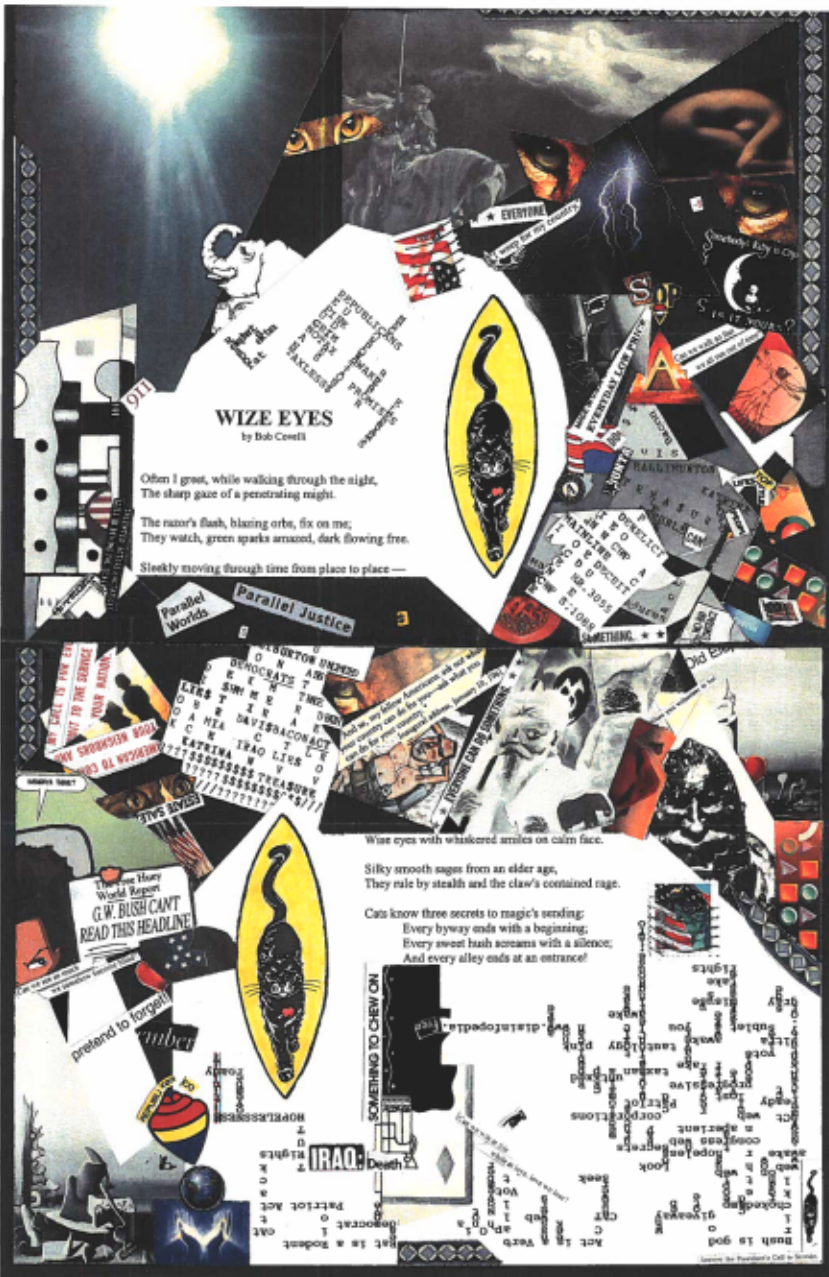
From passing out in dive bars
To passing time behind bars
How far must one faulted man

Fall to the bottom finding freedom
Washed up and dashed upon rocks
He's now forced to break

Forgotten by everyone, left only
To be haunted by the ghosts
Of all he should have been

But finding himself strangely
Liberated, suddenly free, with
Every glove up into the clouds
With every word written and
Thrown up into the wind.

—*Dan Grote*



Prose
Bob Covelli
Dixon, Illinois



Darryl Allen
London Correctional Institute
London, Ohio

SILENCE MEANS CONSENT

LIBERATION, OR SILENT NEVERENDING DEGREDDATION



*Darryl Allen
London Correctional Institute
London, Ohio*

It's not alright to ignore a 64 year old man's serious medical and psychiatric needs. They call us "inmates" or seriously mentally ill (SMI) "inmates," and somehow forget we are human people, or rationalize away the failure to give us the help and protection we need as unusually vulnerable patients/prisoners. The "pet-inmate" porter/workers run the places. They steal, overcharge, and extort the worst mentally hurt of us while most staff's "pet-inmates" are the ones who clean, serve food, collect commissary slips, pass out commissary, pack up the property of those sent to segregation, and other jobs either the staff should be doing or pretend they actually do. "Pet-inmates"—the known threat to the most vulnerable. (I actually v omit at the thought of them!)

As strong as I would like to pretend I am, in spited of feeling ashamed that I need to ask for help from anyone, all I can think of after being ignored, lied to, manipulated, hurt, and injured so often is what is left of my body. If you have ever been beaten badly, deeply and physically hurt, you may understand what I feel. When you've been physically injured so often, getting stitches, having complaints ignored and emergency grievances shunned, you realize you are just an envelope of skin—an easily penetrated envelop that holds together what's left of your life.

What is worse than soft tissue damage—no muscle tissue left to lose or damage any worse than it is now—no trauma therapy at all to ease away some of the hurt from seeing “pet-inmates” do all the above and then get away with hounding two SMI men into suicide.

The plaintiff has sat next to a toilet filled with vomit so often, had his weight go up and down so often, straining his heart and weakening his body, has fell down so often, injuring his face and head and back, that he will readily admit his view of reality may be tainted by anything from frustration and terror to anxiety and a (dread) bone-deep despair. Many a night plaintiff has sincerely wondered if he should forgive all the named and unnamed defendants for letting him wither away: for letting him deal with the trauma of suicides (while dying slowly) and without trauma therapy or care of any kind; for letting him die so slowly that they are blind to their own deliberate indifference—the scornful way they regularly reject his unending requests, complaints, pleas for help, emergency grievances, affidavits and notarized letters—believing their non-actions are “reasonable” (reasonable silences/ ignoring or shrugging off his serious psychiatric and medical needs) due to their honest failure to see his ever so fragile humanity, the atrophy and massive loss of muscle tissue among other injuries, because of the fact they see him as an “inmate,” a label they’ve used so often (in training as well as on the job site itself) that it has dehumanized him and desensitized them. It has induced an apathy so pervasive that no amount of logic by plaintiff, no amount of deductive reasoning by anyone labelled

I am not against the sanctioning of programs that actually contribute to rehabilitative and protective measures that inspire a prisoner or parolee to take responsibility for the crime committed while working earnestly towards identifying and eradicating thoughts and behavior patterns that transgress the laws or people. Such programs must be founded upon ensuring that the rights of participants remain inviolate.

I don’t claim to be infallible, but I am a firm believer that you can only commit your self unto being a part of the solutions, rather than the problems that plague ourselves and our society. Life is a class—pay attention. What I am to my enemies, I am not. My only revenge is to attain a power that will outlast and transcend my enemies’ desires. Happiness through truth is the will and purpose of God in man, as man is in God. I rise in fire. I am coming out of the flames. The struggle continues.

—*Clinton Troy Riley*
Indiana

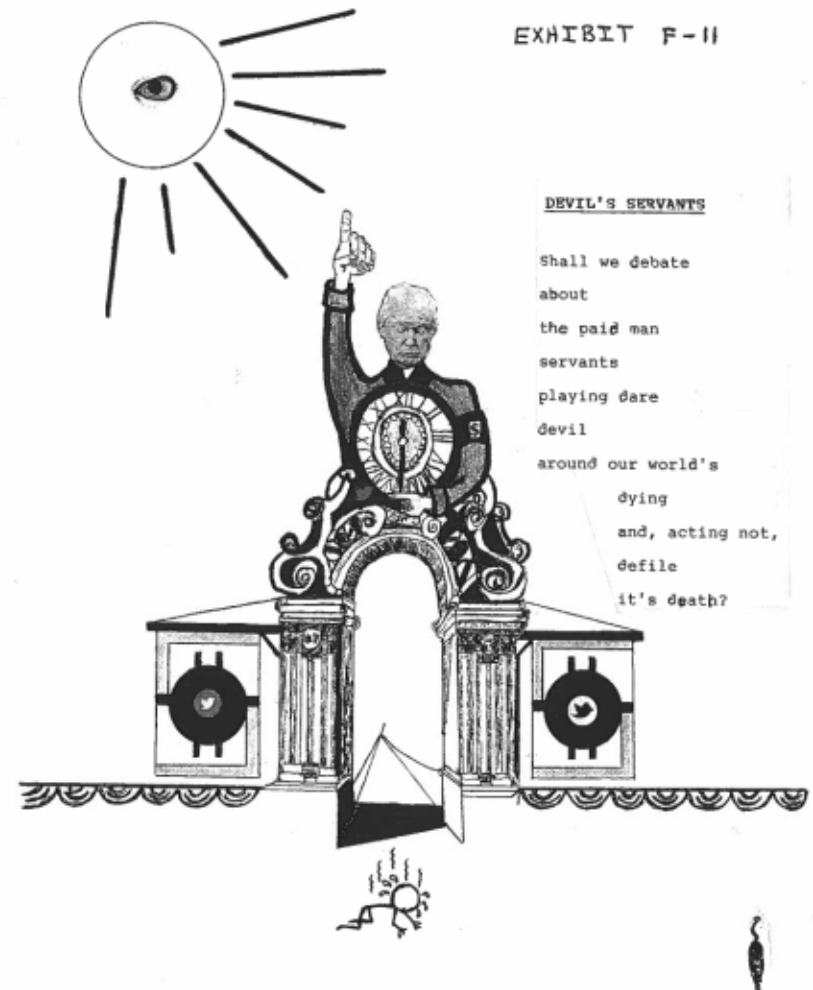
serves as a conduit to destabilize a parolee in order to provide the parole officer the leeway to revoke one's parole for technical reasons, and this data is attributed to recidivism. In this way, legislation and privatization unite in unholy matrimony to perpetuate ideologies and transform them into policy that solidifies the unilateral interests shared between the sheets of the Indiana Department of Corrections, New Castle Correctional Facility, the Parole Board, and Liberty Behavioral Health (the providers of Insomm), all of whom depend on each others' numbers to keep in line with generated contracts for all those involved that have placed a stake in monetary gain as a result thereof.

This is how the prison system's style of human trafficking is sponsored, justified, and colored as something other than what it is: facilitated by the stigma of public contempt towards those who are guilty of sex crimes and also towards those who are not.

Nothing just can come from that which does not proceed from reason. With this in mind, how are those who decide what is illegal and unconstitutional any different than the prisoners and parolees they exploit and capitalize off of? Are they not criminals as well? What of their moral and mental state of being? No sane person not already inclined to criminality would postulate and enforce policy and stipulations so restrictive as to ensure the complete failure of those seeking redemption and progress in pursuit of happiness and efficiency towards a better life.

"inmate" can ever hope to penetrate. If the defendants are deemed not at fault, if the derogatory term "inmate" is solely to blame, plaintiff prays the court will ban, forbid, and prohibit the continued use of any such label as "inmate" so no one else is ever hurt or injured and has their obvious hurts and injuries ignored for so long.

**Bob Covelli
Dixon, Illinois**



UNTIL

Until you've been arrested
And spent endless days in jail.
And walked a hundred miles
Without ever leaving your cell.
Until you've lost your family
And you're utterly alone.
You try to seek comfort
Realizing it was left at home.
Until you've faced a judge
And entered a guilty plea.
And you've heard the words of judgement
That you won't be going free.
You lie awake at night
Shedding endless-tears
Until you've lost all hope
And every dream you've ever had.
You fight to keep your sanity
And fear that you'll go mad.
Until you've gone through all these things
And lost all human will.
How can you look at me and say you
know just how I feel.

—*Anonymous*

BENEATH THE SURFACE

Beneath the surface, the concept being purely commercial, is nothing more than a collusive campaign to keep one in prison longer and to return a parolee to prison as soon as possible. It's the underlying basis for somm and the additional parole stipulations for the so-called sex offender. It is in fact a fabrication of theories expressive more of the bizarre than of rationality.

As you can see, from this is created a plausibly sophisticated structure intended for a type of control over the life of a prisoner and parolee so unduly restrictive that it almost guarantees failure of one being able to meet ever-shifting demands interpreted to exact ambiguity. The enforcement of additional parole stipulations is predicated upon unconstitutional policy that facilitates forced submission via threats to extend the sentence of a targeted prisoner or parolee (a facade for so-called rehabilitative methods and monitoring) that is simply another means of economic, class, and sexual exploitation that inevitably has nothing to do with the parolee successfully re-integrating back into and becoming a viable part of family and society as a whole.

In truth, this concept only serves a subversive plot to further colonize and capitalize off those in the grasps of the irrational and ill-intended. The policy created for additional parole stipulations

THE DEEP END

It seems to me that
were I ever to be
happy, were I ever
to be sober, safe, serene,
it just wouldn't work,
and work it is, taking
oh so much effort
to just give up, to admit
that you're stuck, mired,
in a rut and left to
the role of playing a
first-class fuckup, so
why is everyone always
trying to fix what was
put on this earth to
show you the ways of
The Broken Man, the
one whose tomorrow is
always a Last Stand,
the one who drowned
himself in a whiskey
glass so you'd be scared
enough to learn to swim,
so you'd be free of the
terrible weight that
always dragged me down.

—*Dan Grote*

KISMET

Kill me
Is sometimes what
My memories do
So I
Receive Face
Review Embrace
Release Erase
 into Peace

ACCEPT

and create my fate

I choose my destiny.

—*May Meridian*

LIBERATION

FROM A MICHIGAN PRISONER

Allow me to be frank if I may, outside of the typical definitions. We are taught of "Liberation:" bringing you into the perceptions of those who have been "Liberated", and who seek to be "Liberated". To be "Liberated" is to uplift and enhance yourself and those who suffer your cause! To free the mind and the body, and to unlock the soul from its chamber of affliction: passed on down the line by the slaves of then to the slaves of now, who have beaten, drilled, and broken into submission by the hands of a system which bleeds the very fabric of social equality dry!

To be able to claim Liberation is to be able to burn down the gates of oppression, prejudice, disinformation, and systemic racism, while still holding onto your morals and beliefs, your dignity and integrity, and stand steady out in your mission to eradicate racism! Liberation means a freedom that is me being foreign to a country full of foreigners! Liberation means that we don't just sit back and wait for the creator to hand us miracles, but we put forth the effort expecting struggle, expecting strife and pain.

We drive until we have reached our destination! And, what is a revolutionary destination? What can be Anarchic good? What is the dream of an abolitionist? Complete and utter "Liberation"! For the bible says "Faith without works is dead!" Some of us 'claim' to have "faith" in a specific cause, yet we do nothing to strengthen it! Only in the wake of "National unrest" do we choose to stand up, but if we are to be taken seriously the fight must not relax, the fist must not unclench and we should not

THE BROKEN SYSTEM

I'm treated like an animal held in a cage
If I let loose emotion it must be rage
You act like a predator, I won't be your prey
There's no right in this world be it night or day
Depression is weakness. They'll tear you apart
Best to keep your hands up right from the start
The stars in the sky can't count all my pains
But I tuck them so deep only anger remains
So why place me here if they want me to change?

—*Stephen Brown*
Columbia C.I.
Portage, Wisconsin

AUTHOR'S NOTE: When I wrote this I was thinking of the injustices of the world of incarceration. Not only what the guards do to prisoners, but what convicts and inmates do to each other: making anger the only safe emotion because they are looking to prey on the weak. Some use rape, extortion, bullying, and theft, or a combination of these. Yes, there are gangs and cliques we utilize to help, protect, and support each other, yet a lot of times it causes more issues than solutions. Imagine if when there was an issue within the prison system, all the inmates set these ties aside and all came together. There is great power in unity. Wisdom, Knowledge, and Understanding are also power, so utilize them. I want to dedicate this to the true convicts out there that understand what I'm talking about: keep your heads up and struggle on.

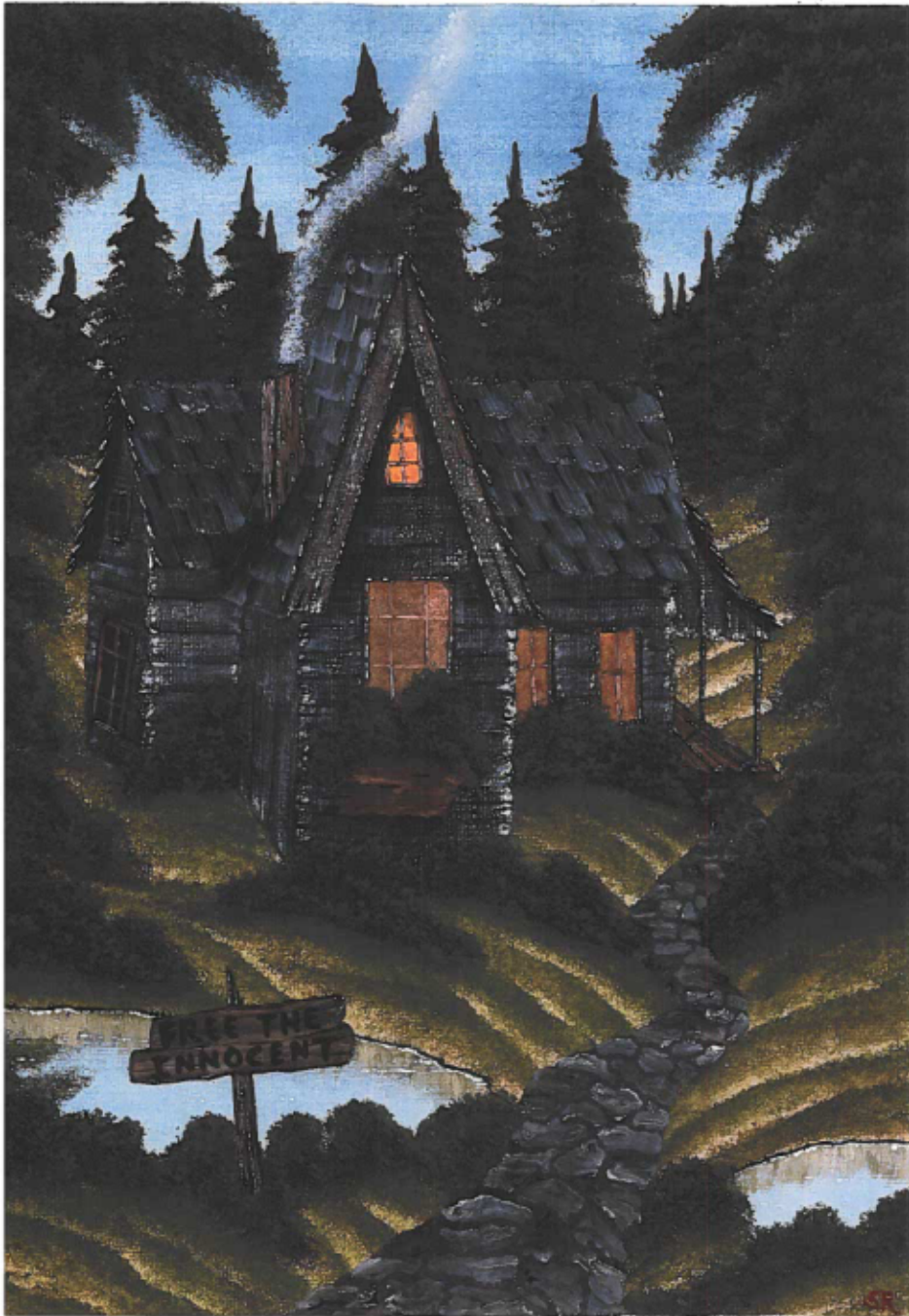
allow our voices to be silenced! That is "Liberation" to me and the brothers and sisters of our cause. In solidarity and respect.

Jonathan Summers
A.k.A. "Big Prynce-G"
Founder of the United States S.T.O.P.P. initiative and
the B.M.G.F. Inc.
Bellamy Creek, Michigan

You wonder how one finds their way in a ruthless system
Many do not as it's like they dreamed up a nightmare
And imposed it upon the vulnerable
I myself fell for their tricks
Though I am in no way weak.
You see I have sleeves of my own
The tides turn and tyrants see what they are shown
I no longer fear to lose all of my ambition
Because my strength gives me my own rehabilitation
Now they call me a monster with this Rem
And a terrorist with these lines.
The ruthless system just can't beat that.

—*Victor Brown*
AKA Victor Frankenstein





A RUTHLESS SYSTEM

Prison takes your freedom away

You don't know what it is like to have to listen and obey

What it's like to live in anger and pain

What it is like to realize that you have already gone insane!

In prison you are all alone

Surrounded by Razorwire, chains and robbed by a damn pay
phone

Is being locked in a 5 x 9 cell one of your fears?

Try living there for many years

You think you forgot how to cry

But one day they let you out

And you break down like you are gonna die

Do you know what it is like to be happy but lost at the same
time?

Free, but locked up for lack of the right dime

S.R.

Wisconsin



