
A LIFE IN PIECES:
An Anthology from the cage

Poetry

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Poetry
by Jermaine Jackson

(5/30/16)

As of the date noted above, my incarceration has persisted for a long time (22years), and the twenty awesome and eclectic poems composed within this anthology were written, rewritten, scratched and clawed for during a time of my imprisonment which I call The Blue Period. The language is raw, personal and captivating.

Enjoy. Thank you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: The Blue Period

	Page
Never forgotten, yet un-remembered	1
How does one nurture hope?	2
Tormented by restrictions	3
Penfriended hopes	4
Confine Meant	5
Ask Inspiration	7
I am Dying Confidence	8
How does one not succumb?	9
The Privilege disguised as right	10
No way, Two days, No wait	11
What, Who am I?	13
What a tragedy	14
What a tragedy, I believe	16
Depravity's Prayer	17
Hustler's Reminder	18
Issues, it is you!	19
Incline	20
Whatever happen(ed) to mercy?	21
Still, I rise	24
Wash Horses	26

CHAPTER
ONE

THE BLUE PERIOD

NEVER FORGOTTEN
YET, UN-REMEMBERED

Your favorite color

I can easily remember.

I often see it

During days of January thru' December.

~~I could never forget~~

The way it makes you smile.

But, whenever I see it, now,

Thoughts of you never come to mind.

I can think back to the days

And years we've shared.

Tears, laughter, sadness

And smiles were all there.

And now that time has gone by

Without any hugs nor kisses,

When good laughter comes along

Thoughts of you are not intended.

Of course I know who you are,

How could I forget, never?

But, now, I'm living to survive

And I can rarely think of you, if ever.

HOW DOES ONE NURTURE HOPE?

When the lights go dark
And the cold steel slams shut
Making an awful,
Soul-crushing sound
Long after silence has touched;
When the haunting questions
Rapidly arises,
Such as: "Where is my savior?"
"Where is my neighbor?"
"Where are my friends?"
"When is the end?"

When the answers come
Like the pains of cold turkey,
Causing the bones to convulse;
When the jones-ing feeling
Of being buried
Becomes overwhelming
And the only digging tool
Is that unseen gold,
i.e. TRUST;
But yours is the grand size
Of a small slotted spoon,
How does one nurture hope?!

TORMENTED BY RESTRICTIONS

Dreams are unable to flourish

because there's an invisible hand that strangles out the courage.

A gleaming carrot dangles on a short stick.

It's obtainable

but drastic punishments accompany the slightest attempt.

The loving image of my child is crystal clear,

she's right before her dad.

Reaching out is natural, right?

But the menacing partition cuts our love in half.

The sounds of sweet music must meet stringent regulations

before allowed to grace my ear.

A plea for help (a cry out to family)

Is limited to minutes throughout the entire year.

Repeatedly forced to eat,

sleep,

breathe

and even wear restraints.

Suppressing long held beliefs

because it's regularly pronounced that I can't.

The burdens of restrictions

will cause a rage to boil unprecedented.

This torment is common amongst millions.

So there's at least one who can imagine

the difficulties of repressing my fury.

Tormented by restrictions.

PENFRIENDED HOPES

Imagine being confined away in a dark environment
—light is scarce.

Suddenly you find a rare bird, has come.
Every week sweet melodies flutters into your heart,
riding on the wings of that rare bird.

The ears dance to its tunes, never failing.

Its warblings grab the soulful, churning the soul feeling,
each and everynight.

In turn, your prayers invert to pleadings
that no harm shall ever near this emancipator.

That bird... That rare, beautiful creation,
bringing warm life to the skin of your dreams.

"Please!" you whisper and scream, whether its wings deliver
silence or a song.

A penfriend for the caged in, is this...
imagine the hopes.

CONFINE MEANT

Entering: First words spoken, "Help me, please."

Desperation in my plea. Did you hear me?

Ever?

Seclusion's answering voice

—amplified by suffocating walls—

Mocks, only.

~~I can not avoid it forever...indeed.~~

The sky is closed.

Despair.

The bleak hope for the Day is what's left.

Not a hope in tomorrows, just THE Day.

Desire, other than, is dangerous.

Dissatisfaction and frustrations

Are generated by such, en masse.

Gunline. Blast!

Try crossing seeking another hope, desire... Try.

Moving shadows aren't shadows anymore, then.

Vengeance to the suffocation; no compassion, now.

Herein recommended: selfishly silence ALL joys.

No guidance for mine, there wasn't.

Trial, error; experience, now, commissions a dark shape

To crowd my exits.

At times, stretching the length of mind.

How big is that?

Wonder?

Sight, hearing, touch, taste—

Senses know not the shape.

Yet, its gifts, pains, certainly are

Heard, seen, felt, tasted—repugnant, even in smells.

Sadness has my voice; how must I repent?

Speaking only whispers through tears.

But, inside I cry... Can't show.

So, again...how must I?

CONFINE MEANT (cont.)

No matter,
Loss, gloom, heaviness stalks mind; senses, incessantly.
So, even at close proximity
And shouting at my attentions with How's answers,
Hearing you, I can't.
Understanding devoid.
The meaning of answers, as well.
Truth's intent; solution's intent
Must travel through the muck of dark galaxies, first.
Again, how big is that, mind?
Wonder...
Is confine all mind?
Or is confine meant?

ASK INSPIRATION

Inspiration

Where do we find it? Is it meant to be sought after?

Does it possess a certain complexion?

Or require specific forms of matter?

Inspiration

Is it shameless and unreserved like the brash?

Does it have a flagrant nature for one's attention
to catch its grasp?

Inspiration

Are there any aliases for it?

May I call out for it by any other name?

If failure shall find me,
could I use it as an excuse
to clear away all shame?

Inspiration

How strong is its armor?

Can it be pierced by doubt if I fail to yield?

Does it ever tell lies to procure the hopes that I build?

Inspiration

Is it appropriate
to choose between different levels of its gratification?

How many times can its subjects squander its application?

These are not questions

Designed to harbor suspicion.

Inspiration has never forsakened

It was I who chose indifference.

I AM DYING CONFIDENCE

I exude brilliance whenever I take a stride
My swagger is off the chain, bringing envy to many eyes
Hell naw, I don't rely on another's assurance of mine
I am confidence, all alone in mine
Just check my shine I can tell you all about my play
Exaggerate my history to make myself believe the say
But why do I frown so much?
And often fall short of my goals?
I am self-assured, and certain that I am even bold
What's wrong?
Aw man, let's get off that sour note
You can never know that I didn't get what I spoke
So often I have told fiction-type lies
That's my type of truth
Which never fail to get you claiming that I'm fly
So, then, where's the "Why?"?
Or the frequently used "But"?
Regardless of the glory in the story
There's always at least one in the cut
Now I've got the real scoop, The Truth, that is
I am dying in my own confidence
Because I refused to believe in His
I AM is Confidence

HOW DOES ONE NOT SUCCUMB?

When heartache strikes leaving you in tears and deep fears
to never love again;

When it hurts to simply think about an embrace
and depression is on the verge of storming in,

How does one not succumb?

When unbearable pain comes in the form of a lost child,
whether the tribulation occurs by the perils of peer pressure,
or an early unexpected death that is foul,

How does one not succumb?

Once trust has betrayed your innocence

~~to the fangs of molestations—terrorized repeatedly—~~

and loved ones whom you hold dear

ignore your obvious cries and frustrations,

How does one not succumb?

When faith seem to be just a long burning wait,
allowing cancers to invade;

When terminal illness dominate your economy,

dominate your joy, your world and every waking day,

How does one not succumb?

When there is no visible light at the end of pain;
no light at the end of sorrow, depression or suffering,

When hurt weighs so heavy,

simply arising out of bed cause great struggling,

How does one not succumb?

The answers, if anyone dares to mention, are not visible

—but are, none the less, tangible.

THE PRIVILEGE DISGUISED AS RIGHT

I'm longing for something far, far away
Something I'm told I cannot have
Love, maybe
Hatred...maybe
What a privilege to have the existence of both
Since without the other I could never appreciate the right, one
this longing I once possessed it
At least I thought so
Though recalling my former circumstances
happiness seemed remitted
Can happiness, then, be what's longed for?
Remembering only pain, I suppose,
Because I'm surrounded and drowning in its unbearableness
Maybe my inability to recall is contaminating my beliefs
...maybe
Beliefs in unalienable rights
Beliefs in love; sadness
Feeling betrayed whenever life reveals a truth
that many know to be lies
Still, late revelations leaves me longing...still
Being forced to participate in solitary
Has left me segregated from the free world
Just as Colored were from Northern
Same heritage for me—no coincidence
In ignorance, my beliefs can not defend my answers
and obtain that longing
So there is a forceful effect to my being
Making me unassailable to freedom
The conspired sentence informs, after the fact
That my freedom was a privilege all along
Then, obviously, I have been longing for that to be right

NO WAY, TWO DAYS, NO WAIT

It is said that if the book isn't thrown
only two days are spent inside
—one upon entry and one upon liberty;
bird flipping day!—
what a lie...

What about all the days
children are growing older;
mom and pop are growing grayer
and the spouse is found out.

Ouch!

That's around the days
when funds begin to run out begging
and friends begin to spin
a wealth of broken promises.

Then comes those days
where late night hunger pains
become a regular mainstay;
and the sight of the strong man
seeking refuge and companionship
with the weaker
starts to lose its shock value.
That's in continuation of the days
when anger, pain and frustration
compels the pushup count
to climb harsher and higher;
and the benchpress beatings
pounds deeper and heavier.

Thus enters the dark days
when inevitable harassment by the guards
takes the constant—cruel and unusually,
and the only one who could help
is in a prayer
whose words have lost touch, both ways.

Let's not omit the broken days
when the mentality ascend, uncontrollably

NO WAY, TWO DAYS, NO WAIT (Cont.)

into spiritual doctrines and dogmas
or the deadend schemes of the dreaming con;
and trying desperately
to prevent the decline
into the recesses of insane's insanity
where countless have hopelessly plunged.

Two days, no.

One is a long time coming

and the first one is not even the half of it.

WHAT, WHO AM I?

Without an education to seriously lend to my development

My tender mother was obliged to shuttle me out into the heat.

Once the maternal door was closed my mind was singed

And the battle for my life was instantly lost.

But, what am I, naive?

~~My youth was immediately attacked by the dimwitted misguidance of a villian~~

Who unsuspectingly gained my trust, loyalty and vows.

Hunger pains left me famished for acceptance

Causing me to numb and unconsciously deaden my senses.

So, who am I becoming, senseless?

The cold days now come, stay and persist

~~And I can no longer go by the chosen name christianed to me~~

Indeed I've tried asking the angels to deliver my cries to God

But it seems that they only hope that the heavens would listen.

Now, what am I, condemned; unforgiven?

Still, relentlessly I pursue my failures

Even after witnessing others

~~—who were more savvy than me—~~

Lose at this game, and lose constantly.

It has a tantilizing and seductive voice that's only heard by us burned.

So, who am I now, scorched chaff?

~~I have destructively lived for it~~

And it seem like I badly need it, eventhough it kicks me down

And spits upon me like drenching, dirty rains.

Shame.

For what am I at this point—obviously nothing?

However, the truth has finally hit me

Like a wealth of sparks

That has surged through my common sense.

Now one lone tear has caused a puddle to form at my feet

Because all along I knew...

I am Strong, Strength.

WHAT A TRAGEDY

Tragedy has pervasively occurred
But majority of the birds
Have never felt the pain
From the dark skies
That only flies
America's black doves

Nations are unaware of the psychological attacks
On the strong minds
Because violence turned against own
Is erroneously labeled as a crime
No mentions of genocide

The heritage had to strive
And knowingly die
For our free thought
(But is the reason still alive?)
My father turned out to be a dinner thief
Mom paid the fines for his absence
Giving half-assed lessons
To the pains of raising me

Drama is played out on the silver screen
And now TV

To perpetuate
And imitate
What I have seen...in life
But those actors
Could never capture
The emotional cost
Of those who've actually bought
The tragic feelings of the knife

There is an implanted thirst for lust
Within the souls of us
Not just...for the skin

WHAT A TRAGEDY (Cont.)

But the fatalistic street fire
"No sellout" was once the mantra
But the unsuspecting souls
Were currency exchanged
Because we were falsely told
That the true American goals
Became insatiably higher

I had a number of dreams
That went up in smoke
Many more that went down with dope
And plenty others that vanished
And has gotten lost
On the way to finding hope

What a tragedy

WHAT A TRAGEDY, I BELIEVE

I believe that if there is an inkling of faith within it
The many cries to heaven will produce extraordinary gold.
Yet, when a child's existence lives in the dirt
It is harelip close to impossible
Not to bring depravity and sin to its dinner bowl.

~~I fiercely try to remain faithful~~

~~By daily touching my lips with a prayer before sleep.~~

~~I try my damndest to ignore the fact
That the flooding rains precedes the sleet
And the agonizing setbacks are intended for my defeat.~~

~~And although I haven't laced my speech with malice or anger~~

~~Listen closely to the silence, you'll hear my tormented screams.
Battling the jail cells, the prison walls and the smiling streets
Which has captured my father's
And all of my children's dreams.~~

So while tears are blinding my eyes
I'm fightin', bruisin' ev'ry knuckle.
But I am far behind in this vicious battle
Because my unified fight
Has abandoned all of my people's struggles.

~~Don't believe me?~~

~~See the scars etched permanantly in my veins and ev'ry nerve.
Carved there, not by the knife
But from the fights in shards of broken glass
That stains all the gutters of the ghetto curbs.
So, send me no more lies in the many cries...please.
Because not only do I believe
But the entire world does as well
Believe I am lost...indeed.
What a tragedy, I believe.~~

DEPRAVITY'S PRAYER

From God I came
Hoping unto God I shall return
Gather up the pure souls
So, is the plan to leave the rest to burn?
Foolheartedly I would battle any flame
Shaking off the fears of hope
~~I'm so chaotic in life~~
That any consolation is to dispose
All tears in street smoke
Unknowingly I will continue to aimlessly drift
'Til I collapse from the stings of liquor
Trying, again, and again to numb it out
But the pain grows thicker
Facadely appearing anxious and fearless
Toward the jouneys of distance
Spiritual direction to the gate
But will my fate ever listen?
Reduced to lockdowns and cementaries
That's my peers and kin
Excused as cold results of a fierce world
Where death is considered from friends
By all means if You are truly Holy
By the murdered I swear
~~Whatever I stole from hell~~
I cry it all back through this prayer

HUSTLER'S REMINDER

Whenever one chooses a life where money is the partner and the gun is the guardian, never allow jail or death to become a surprise. Always remind yourself, daily, that both are inches away from every blink that you take.

This is the power over good luck, as well as bad luck—and it surely overpowers the rampant street disease, stupidity. Hustler

ISSUES, IT IS YOU!

In a brightly lit box I sit in the dark

with the ghosts that created me.

Empty all the bottles of poison into the heart,

it is the only way to breath.

The energy to dream has been snatched away

but still I fight the nightmarish fears.

Silence in the screams of my voice cannot say;

don't blame me for setting flames to tears.

Marks of misery chases love to the dirt of hurt;

fenced in and caged down—wondering why?

Ran to the streets because devils sat in the church.

Choices: Sin or Soul—one must die.

INCLINE

I incline those with a colored heart to remember the days

Before firearms replaced the blade

Before occasional smokers became addict-feens

And would do anything for a bump of that blaze

It almost saddens the soul to reminisce

Because now it is common to see Momma

Stealin' and geekin'

And Pops claiming the names of Smooth or Pimpin'

But in all honesty he's just a nickle and dime-ass preacher

I have a lone tear in me that need to speak

There is no doubt that today's memories

Will burn child's innocence, instantly

You try it, yourself, to survive off such an inheritance

'Cause if its worth is weighed by real life

The value is just a worthless dollar, only

There is an exodus to put on facades to disguise this truth

Because secrets reveal that we've been left starving and hungry

(By our own)

Incline the heart

WHATEVER HAPPEN TO MERCY?

It is obvious that poverty and fatigue
Is the disease of so many
As a youth most of my peers only believed
That they were fly
After getting high

Nowadays in the streets

You can actually smell the souls
Of our children burning

It's like the last corner of hell
And death is present in every waking moment

When all you know and believe in is poor
You remain poor for every forsaken minute

This illusion is the Bible's truth

For many

Because it was translated from the beginning
By the mindless leaders

Listen closely

You can hear society feeding

—with greed—

Off of a certain flesh

Ordering mass convictions at an alarming rate

Then, we try to fight

Their German dogs

With our scare-dy rats

Can we elect any more thieves

Than we already got?

Taking all the resources

And even robbing us blind

Of our tears and snot

(You still with me?)

WHATEVER HAPPEN TO MERCY? (Cont.)

If so
Tell someone if you've ever seen an angel
These last days
It's been a while
Since anyone has performed an "Our Father"
Or a Hail Mary

Over my neighborhoods
It's actually been ages

One night I swear I saw a street bum
Who resembled Jesus Christ
With the beard, blonde hair and blue eyes
And he was smoking the fit out of satan
Through a glass pipe

So I don't know what is right
'Cause Mama only taught
—through multiple partners—
About the birds and bees

There were no lessons about the weeds
The seeds
The G's
Nor the need to eat

Many children are being criminally charged

As an adult
At the tender age of thirteen
Damn!

That means our babies can be sentenced to death
For a crime they didn't mean
Damn!

Now I wonder can we restore Amazing Grace?
I believe in robbing to make it
He believes in praying
I believe in fighting for it
He thinks I'm crazy

WHATEVER HAPPEN TO MERCY? (Cont.)

We've both decided to send our words up to the sky

Only to witness the skies return rains

Leaving us all thirsty

So, now

I'm asking you

Because I've already asked Him

Whatever happened to mercy?

STILL, I RISE

My Father—

My awesome Father—

Has called me to meditate;

Daily and nightly.

The Law...

The Word...

The Truth.

Success.

Yeah, but Grace is sufficient;

Superabounding all.

How easily I forget, though,

Or taught something extra.

Woe.

Dominated by the flesh that birth has burned in me

I think, in word; in deed, selfishly.

"But, Father, I want this..."

"But, Abba, I want that..."

Please,

Forget about what is purposely meant.

Yes, selfishness, purely.

Therefore my confession, my profession

To my Lord,

To my Savior,

My God

Must be heartfelt.

STILL, I RISE (Cont.)

Thus, heartfilled...not abandoned.

Because that aforementioned flesh,

During past, present and, likely, future,

Has; will, possibly

~~Ignore the call;~~

Disobey the call;

Fumble the call;

Lie to the call;

Rape and murder the call—

If there is a name for any transgression,

Name it,

Likely my flesh has performed it.

So, obviously, it is imperative

To remember, recall

And hold fast to my loving Father's Amazing Grace.

This undeserved Gift,

Through faith,

Has taught me,

Chosen me,

Cleansed and birth me—born, again

—with the Spirit-seal,

That in Him,

"For He is risen,"

I rise.

Regardless.

Still, I rise.

WASH HORSES

The sway of their bodies
The beauty of their motion
The creation of their flawless movement
Is not self determined
Their relentless rider is harsh
Gentle at times

~~Nonetheless, though, uncaring~~

In every saddle, the one
Is the same name as the other
Wind

The mercies of Wind
Found only in its inactive intent
Exercising purpose upon Poseidon's dominion
The surface beyond the wash
The destination where limitations
Are ever present

Sprays of white glitter from the awesome meetings
With jagged realms
Touching great heights
The entire stable could never reach
Unless