

MANUSCRIPT ~

*Exhale...*

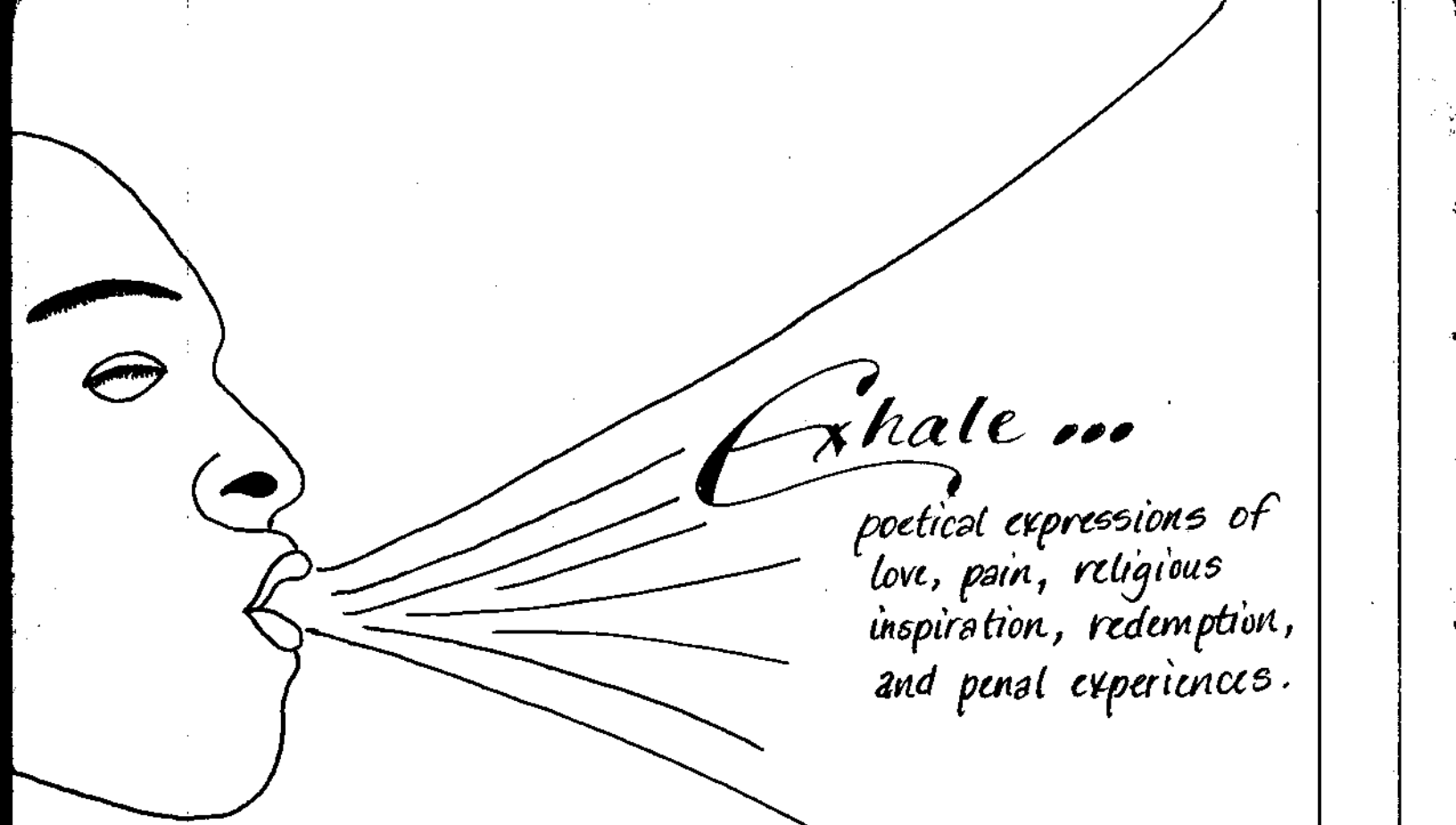
*poetical expressions of  
love, pain, religious  
inspiration, redemption,  
and penal experiences.*

LESTER B. LEWIS, JR.

GENERAL DELIVERY

LOUISIANA STATE PENITENTIARY

ANGOLA, LOUISIANA 70712-9813



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*ORIGINAL WORK BY:  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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To the two women here at Angola ... Mrs. Dorothy Young-White and Mrs. Gloria King: thank you for believing in me and allowing me to share my gift of knowledge as an Academic Tutor for three years, and for helping me up each time I fell. You are the lighthouses in a world gone dark.

## DEDICATION

First and foremost, to my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and God the Father. I know that I tend to do things my way, and that I blame you for my troubles when clearly they are my own. I know without you, the gifts nor I would exist.

To my mother, Mrs. Shirley M. Netter Shelmire : you have given me the strength and encouragement to keep on, keeping on by giving of yourself thru your unending love, care, and support.

To my siblings Katina Lewis, Damiene Lewis, Shontell Netter, Heather Lewis, and Lester Lewis, III - I love you more than words can ever say, and there's nothing more solid on this Earth than our bond.

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# INTRODUCTION

## "Come Go With Me"

Come go with me  
to a place suspended in time  
that knows no love  
and expresses joy in pain ...

Come go with me  
to my present and temporal sleeping place  
a big warehouse of bodies  
and vast acres of graveland ...

Come go with me  
amidst voided compassion  
and death is in abundance ...

Come go with me :  
to the Louisiana State Penitentiary.

I.

LOVE  
IN  
CONFINEMENT



"Like a Vine"

Though we are separated by time and space  
our love can never be stopped  
reaching every square inch  
of our heart and soul  
like a vine.

Like a vine,  
if it is cut off and burned  
if the root is  
severed and damaged ~  
our love will cease to  
exist.

Think about it ...

## "IF"

If the eyes are truly  
the windows to the soul  
I'd gaze into yours continuously  
just to be made whole.

If the sun by itself  
brightens the entire world by day  
you're the equivalent in my life  
for I wouldn't have it any other way.

If dreams are a link to the future  
and guide one of what to do  
I'd only want to spend  
the future with only you.

If time could truly be stopped  
to rectify a wrong and make it right  
I'd take the windows, sun, and dreams  
to establish a world with you to our delight.

## "Aesthetically Speaking"

Beauty 101 is the class that you teach  
the auralty of your being is what I seek -  
Mesmerized by your existence, your presence; so divine  
I feel unworthy to have you as mine.

You're the flower that blooms in the Springtime sun  
like the strains of a love tune that has just begun -  
you are so lovely, that when I look upon your face  
I'm transported from the inhumanity of this place.

You are exquisite, in every sense of the word and meaning  
to be deprived of your love is to have me flinching -  
as we become as one; our future we are seeking  
spoken thoughts of you is simply aesthetically speaking.

II.

PAIN

6

## "I'm Still Here"

Maybe they've forgotten the address  
I think they've lost sight of the place  
or is it, they are tired  
of looking in my face?

Various letters written to the outside  
expanding the debt owed to LSP  
no money sent in to assist  
it feels as if they've abandoned me.

I cannot call because of a phone block  
letters marked: "Return to Sender"  
thoughts and emotions totally mixed up  
as if they've been placed in a blender.

I don't want to die alone in this place  
for that's my greatest fear  
an urgent message to those who've forgotten:  
SOS: "I'm Still Here!"

## "Love/Hate Relationship"

I think it's called, confusion  
of what I feel for you  
though I confess my love for you daily  
there are times that I hate you, too.

I cry to you when I'm hurting  
I call in the midst of my pain  
but it seems you have turned on me  
as if, of me, you are ashamed.

I love you for all I've learned of you  
but I hate you because you've left me alone  
I write these words to express to you  
the reason for this painful song.

Do you hear me as I cry to you?  
Do you understand all that I feel?  
I question you because I don't know  
so let your child know the deal.

I love you because you love me  
but I hate your results to my cry  
I write this song, for I need to know the reason  
of this love/hate relationship and of the why.

## "Early Morning Thoughts"

It's 3 a.m., I can't sleep  
my mind is full and overloaded  
... it's deep!

I sit up on my prison bunk  
looking out at the depressing fog  
... sick of this junk!

Still in the penitentiary  
away from home  
... physically longing to be free.

I brush with AIM, H<sub>2</sub>O hits my face  
constantly thinking of home  
... gotta get out of this place!

Thoughts of yesteryears hit my mind  
I shed another tear; just one drop  
... life seems so unkind.

A thin line between insanity and sanity  
if the line is broken  
... blind rage and pain takes over; I can no longer see.

III.

RELIGIOUS  
INSPIRATION  
IN  
PRISON



## "Reality of God's Love"

In a world dominated by the mass of sin  
one can truly experience a revelation  
and the reality of God's love within.

I was once lost in deep despair  
wanted to give up on life  
'cause I thought no one cared.

It sometimes take being at the end of your rope  
to realize the depth of God's love  
through fervent prayer, faith, and hope.

The totality of God's love  
is that it's all around and in you  
orchestrated from above.

Experience God's omnipresence  
as pure as a dove  
that's when you realize and know  
the reality of God's love.

## "Stigmata"

The whips and cat-o-nines  
they used to batter your skin  
is the pain and hurt  
that I felt deep within.

They spat upon and cursed you  
even blasphemed your Holy name  
I cringed at their harshness  
My Lord, I felt the same.

You were made to carry your cross  
down that rough and unfriendly road  
it was then that I felt the strain  
from that weary and heavy load.

The nails they pounded into your flesh  
were not a pretty sight  
I felt the pain, for it was much  
and I cried with all my might.

You did it all just for me  
you did it for us all  
you did it because of agape love  
and now I heed your call.

"Thank You"  
(an ode to nature)

I've taken the sun for granted  
haven't appreciated its' shine  
regret for not thanking you, Lord  
that you have made it mine.

I've not enjoyed the gentle breeze  
that you've sent along my way  
ignored that it has come from you  
without a fault or delay.

I know your eyes are on the sparrow  
with you, nothing but the best will do  
so, I ask your forgiveness for my selfishness  
Dear Lord, for all, I thank you.

I thank you for the morning sun  
thank you wholeheartedly for the gentle breeze  
thank you, Lord, for watching over me  
my whole life, it's you I aim to please.

IV.

TO

BE

REDEEMED

"Redeemed"  
(a statement)

My redemption  
lies in the hope  
that ...

as my Redeemer lives,

the prison gates  
will be opened -  
WIDE,

and I shall walk  
out a free man ...

in Christ,  
in faith,  
in love.

## "The Awakening"

The courtroom doors open once again  
the Judge slams down his gavel  
out the windows, I look at the roads  
years ago that I've once traveled.

'We are here on a rehearing,'  
the Judge says to me  
peering into my eyes, he asks:  
'son, why should I set you free?'

Looking around the courtroom  
I take a gigantic sigh  
'Your Honor,' I begin without hesitation  
'I can give you a thousand reasons why!'

I recite to him my words of redemption  
I tell him I'm not the man I use to be  
'Judge,' I conclude, 'I'm spiritually free'  
'today from prison, won't you physically release me?'

II.

WELCOME  
TO  
ANGOLA

## "Sex Fiends, Uncontrolled"

Penological "interests"

are imbedded in the minds of the weak  
ways to prey on those weaker than themselves  
are what they seek.

They have no respect for others  
they'll disrespect all at will  
the cold part about it all  
is the decency of life they kill.

Their actions are repugnant  
they feel it's no big deal  
refusing to acknowledge that are "sick"  
no admitting to being mentally ill.

Exposing themselves as if it's a fashion  
sickness has consumed their souls  
written up as one of the club  
they're sex fiends, uncontrolled.



## "Stop the Madness"

Envision a plantation with rolling green fields  
and uniformed persons on horseback yielding guns  
yes, it's very real.

Envision a cellblock with 6x9 cells  
inmates throwing waste on one another  
becoming animals in a making of their own hell.

Envision an argument over who's the best NFL team  
one is not satisfied; someone has to die  
is what the situation deems.

Such is my world in this penitentiary  
trying to escape the madness  
longing to be free.

Time is overdue to stop the madness  
to stop the fighting and help one another  
then - we'd stop hearing "no" and begin to hear the "yes."

## "Reality Check"

How can we expect to reach the mountaintop  
if we persist to exist in the valley low?

How can we ever get past the stop sign  
if we can't get it together from the word say go?

Daily we die amidst all the pain and sorrow  
because we beat one another down day by day  
no one wants to accept the reins as a leader  
no one wants to come together and pray.

Instead, we find time to do everything else  
we plot and scheme to kill  
not keeping our eyes on the ultimate prize  
but from our fellow inmate, we'll steal.

The reality is they don't care if we get out of prison  
Louisiana doesn't want you to ask "why"  
daily, we perish for a lack of knowledge  
daily, behind these walls, we die.

## "Forty-Nine Years"

Forty-Nine years, and counting downward  
I've been incarcerated much too long  
refusing to give up the good fight  
what hasn't killed me has made me strong.

fourteen years I've been riding here  
most of it has been confined in a cell  
I've encountered so much negativity  
feels I've taken a trip thru hell.

Forty-Nine years in isolation  
is what Louisiana expects me to serve  
they desire for me to do it flat  
that's day for day; they have some nerve!

No evidence offered in my case  
the court still found me guilty  
looking at me, their eyes said it all  
no freedom for a while will I see.

A decade and four, I'm counting upwards  
looking at forty-nine long years  
refusing to lay down and give it all up  
swimming in my pool of tears.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Lester B. Lewis, Jr. has served 22 years of a 49 year sentence.

He has completed Paralegal Studies and has been certified, and enjoys writing, singing, and sketching; as well as being involved in several clubs and church groups within Angola.

Lester is currently at work on an autobiography, a work of fiction, another book of poetical expression, and is writing several songs of hope and inspiration.

To write to the author directly, please write :

Lester B. Lewis, Jr. # 297939  
General Delivery  
Louisiana State Penitentiary  
Angola, Louisiana 70712-9813

# POETICAL NOTES

Corresponding to the appropriate pages, the listing below denotes the year in which that particular poem was written :

PAGE NUMBER

YEAR PENNED

3	_____	2006
4	_____	2001
5	_____	1997
7	_____	1999
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9	_____	2001
11	_____	2003
12	_____	2006
13	_____	1998
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21	_____	2006