

Raw Feelings:  
Writings From Death Row  
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Nonfiction, Poetry & Essays

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The poems and essays in "Raw Feelings: Writings From Death Row" are from my personal experiences on death row, before and beyond, for 20 years. At different times I felt different emotions that became externalized in the written word. Some of it is dark and at other times hopeful. My longings and yearnings are not masked. I haven't tried to put a brave face on things. In the process of trying to find myself, my spiritual journey, it all got mixed up together within my writings. Many times the poem will start out gloomy and later my mood shifted and I added a lighter ending. Hopefully the reader will understand and feel some of what I have endured: my grief, frustration, despair and even joy. May all realize that a condemned man is not the unfeeling monster that the courts and politicians would have you believe him to be.

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The Right Way  
by Kevin J Marinelli

I can vividly remember being young since I was only 22 when I got arrested for a Robbery-Homicide. Most of my life outside of prison was as a young man. At 36 years old some would say I'm still a young man. When you are a teenager, though, 36 is old; especially when you live in an environment that could get you killed at any time. Who can think about tomorrow when you don't know if you'll make it through today? I get it! It's something that one never forgets - even if they want to forget it. And, everyone has regrets, that is a product of being in a lose-lose situation. None of your choices are good so you do what you can. However these same choices are remembered and held against you for the rest of your life. Nobody will let you live it down, even though that is to make them feel better about themselves. Society doesn't think you are mature enough to drink, drive, vote, &c. but you are old enough to mess up your whole life with a few bad decisions, or even just one.

All that being said it becomes obvious how irrational and unreasonable others' expectations are. However, one thing you won't learn in school or on T.V., is that life isn't fair and life is not easy. Sometimes it just sucks. It appears the rules only apply to you and even then they are misapplied, and the rich and famous live by a whole different set of standards. No matter, we still gotta do what is best for us. We need to live as best we can within those rules. Whether or not we agree with them doesn't matter at all. The reality is that this is the world we live in. There is no choice between their way or our way. It's always their way - that's why I'm on death row, they had their way. So, it's either live a life within the rules or try to avoid getting caught living outside of those rules. But, sooner or later everyone gets caught. Nobody truly gets away with anything.

Those of us who get caught sometimes think that if we get smarter, sneakier, and don't make mistakes that we can continue on in our ways without any consequence. The delusion is that the only consequence is within a legal sense. A wiseman once said, "you

are a slave to whatever masters you". Even our behavior or way of thinking can enslave us. Crime is the easy way out. It's for the weak. What takes a lifetime to build legally can be obtained within moments illegally. Doing things the hard way, the legal way, takes character, strength, patience, courage and intelligence. Anyone can stick-up a bank or sell drugs, be in a gang or use drugs, or rape somebody. It doesn't take any character for that! Nothing has really been accomplished. This is why criminals get no respect. Nothing is like respect, and that can only be earned.

Our culture has had a hand in warping our minds. I'm all for taking responsibility (which is a sign of maturity) but many things contribute to our behavior. Environment is a major one that should not be overlooked. We have been brainwashed into thinking some things are important that really aren't; like what you look like, wear, drive, where you live, how big your house is, or how much money you make. What really matters is freedom, truth, family, friendship, generosity, self-respect and love. These things are imperishable, indestructable and give a sense of true fulfillment and worth. Material things pass away and you're left with nothing. Those immaterial things can only be had by the hard way, the way that develops good character and earns the respect of good people.

When we think of great people, those who are remembered throughout time, who everyone has heard of, we don't think of criminals but of figures like Buddha, Jesus, Muhammed, Gandhi and Mother Teresa. Such as these owned nothing, sacrificed all for others, were never senselessly violent and whose only drug was love from a pure heart. So being famous doesn't come from a life of rebellious living; don't worry - being average won't kill you, but a life of crime will; being humble and seemingly "nobody" won't hamper your ambitions, either, but pride and arrogance will; being a good, law abiding person won't make you lame, but believing the lies of a materialistic and superficial culture will.

Buddha gave up the easy life of a Hindu Prince for enlightenment Jesus taught the truth even though it cost him his life; Muhammad reclaimed Mecca without spilling a drop of blood, and Gandhi defeated the mighty British Empire with non-violence; and Mother Teresa's wrinkled face showed forth a beauty of soul that touched the poor throughout the world. Yes, they were rebels, but their rebellion was against the material and tangible (not to gain more of it) and used a method directly contrary to the ways of the world. Criminal behavior is only the desperate act of somebody to fulfill a desire for something in the wrong way; whether it's for things (by stealing), for a feeling (by drugs), for acceptance (by imitation or sex), for power (by violence), &c. But knowing is half the battle.

After being sentenced to death in 1995 I was put in segregation, as all capital case prisoners are. This forced me to confront myself, my situation and how I got there. After a few days I realized that I had traded my life, freedom and family - everything - for the temporary pleasures and possessions of this world over the eternal blessings of the next world. I gave up the immaterial for the material. It really wasn't something I thought up on my own, but was a kind of revelation - like somebody turned the lights on and now I could see it. That feeling and realization hasn't left me in 14 years, nor has it faded. This is the same thing I hope to awaken in others. You really "can't take it with you" when you die, and to risk everything for something so fleeting isn't very smart at all.

None of what I've written will make me popular among my fellow prisoners, nor will it's application make you popular where you find yourself. But, I'm not particularly concerned about being liked by evil or misguided ~~people~~<sup>people</sup>. Are you? Such individuals only like those who are like them. If bad people dislike you it's because you aren't one of them. It's more of a compliment than anything else. Those people won't stand by you in hard times, they don't really love you, they have no heaven to give you or hell to put you in. When I got arrested everyone turned on me. I was a member of the Nazi-skinheads and the U.S.A. National Socialists Party. The leaders were the

first ones to tell the cops all kinds of stories about me. Their concept of "brotherhood" was short lived. Three skinheads help put me here. Those people didn't truly care about me - such people only care about themselves.

Even though I dissed those who did care about me, they were the ones who stuck by me. One should live their life for themselves and do what's best for them. Stand by those who will stand by you and love those things or people worthy of love. Again, life isn't easy and usually the most difficult choice is the right one that leads to less complications in the future. Change is especially hard after you're in a bad predicament. We can't let our circumstances dictate who we are going to be. That's the easy way out, just going with the flow.

When you spend time alone with yourself - without TV or radio and other distractions, you'll find out who you really are. Not many people take the time to really know themselves, but once you do it's a whole new world. Then you can take yourself out into the world and share yourself with others. One of my favorite quotes is from Ralph Waldo Emerson. He said, "have the courage to be in public who you are in private". I hope you will make a solid decision and have a firm resolve to do this with me, keeping in mind that "Bad company corrupts good morals" (St. Paul). To do otherwise would be dishonest. So, "be true to yourself" (Shakespeare) and live a life worthy of life itself.

## We Can Change Too

During an interview on CSAPN2 (BOOKTV) a college professor hit the nail on the head when she said, "Society has been convinced that prisoners are the only people on the face of the earth who can't change." A "Life" or "death" sentence is, in essence, saying the same thing. (Denying "good time" credit is essentially saying "we don't care if you do change".) Time changes everyone, and everything. Even the pyramids have suffered from the constant wear of sandstorms, and the Niagara Falls from water's erosive powers. Prison will do much the same thing.

At times, people wonder who are those truly sorry for their crimes, which ones just had a hard life that sent them astray, or were caught in desperate circumstances; and who are the deliberately mean, cruel, vicious criminals. Erosion reveals what is inside, under the surface. Prison will reveal a person's true character over time. This is why some people become better or worse in prison. Time gives us the opportunity to reflect on our past, observe our present and plan our future. Over time, the cumulative effect of one's situation causes a desire for better circumstances. At first everything in prison is new, but it soon gets old and you become dissatisfied, realizing that this is not the environment you want to be in. Well, change it!

As the saying goes, "it's better to light a candle than curse the dark." We have to see the need for positive change in our lives. Only then will we be motivated to do something. To change yourself is to change every situation. Do you want to be the same person in 20 or 30 years that you were as a teenager? I see old men who have been down since they were kids but haven't emotionally, mentally, or spiritually matured while they have grey hair, bald, bent and broken bodies. There's few things sadder than seeing a 50+ year old child. Maturity is growth, and growth is change. Growth can bring you either closer to, or farther from your goals.

Change can be frightening; but it can also be your friend, when guided, directed, or controlled. The time of prison coupled with the power of change will reveal the true self. Once the outer layers of the world's trauma erodes away, the tender core is exposed; if one dare examine it. Those who do will be amazed, maybe appalled, definitely rewarded. Assessing the damage and determining where you wish to be will help you understand what work needs to be done, (and if you want to do it.) We rarely are the person we want to be. We've gotten off track by uncontrolled change, circumstances beyond our influence, at times. To better yourself is a difficult no matter who you are or where you are; but particularly so in prison. There are too many negative forces beyond your control. Everything seems to conspire against you. You'll get zero cooperation and no empathy. It's a slow journey, changing what's inside, that has been programmed and reinforced for decades. With persistent determination we can all change to become the people we want to be. No matter what society may think, don't allow anyone to convince you that somebody can't change; in prison or out. Personal transformation is done for oneself not others. Be you, for you have to live with yourself, every minute of every day.

Commit to change, because it's worth it, and it's real.

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Dear Sir or Madame,

This is an open letter to the Education Department and to all concerned. I am writing you from pennsylvania's death row. I ask that you not dismiss me for that reason but that because of my position you may take this letter more seriously. I am not attempting to shirk any responsibility for what course of events that lead me here. My intent is to make you aware of those things that I think could of been done to ensure a better result in my education and the formation of my young mind and others like me.

I graduated from Mount Carmel junior-senior High in Mount Carmel,Pennsylvania,Class of 1991. My disappointment with the education system goes back to the elementary level. I was treated as if I was stupid and even told so by many of my teachers; as well as berated and told I'd never amount to anything and put in "special education" classes. The problem with all of that is that it was/is entirely false. I was a poor kid,with glasses,a stuttering problem,as well as ADHD and Fetal Alcohol Exposure (FAE) all of which went undiagnosed. Instead of my "teachers treating me like a human being they treated me like an animal an just shoved me aside. To notice and treat my conditions would of been the responsible and professional thing to do. Abuse was easier,I guess.

Throughout Junior High I had teachers who would either paddle me at the beginning of the class before I had a chance to do anything or eject me from the room as a waste of their time. Anyone with any intelligence can see from my school records that I would do well for the first semester and then get lost with no-one to help me,then suffering frustration I'd give up. This is a usual accurance for children with ADD and ADHD. My stuttering should of raised the question of the various speach therapists as to whether or not I had FAE. None of this was paid attention to,only my status as poor and the brother of trouble-makers. No teacher ever took the time nor made the offer to help me with my schoolwork after school or otherwise. These supposed "educators" had no interest in educating anyone that didn't get it the first time they taught it and how they taught it.

I was always good at anything that I could be shown. If I was shown how to take an entire engine apart I could put it back together. This is not a stupid or dumb person,just somebody who learns differently. I got A's in gym,shop,art,home-economics,and mechanical drawing/drafting. These are all hands-on classes. This too was a sign of my intelligence,industrialness,and that I only learned different from others. Instead of this being used for my

benefit it was used to further abuse and insult, ostracize and marginalize, demean and discourage me. Even when I enlisted to the Army pre-graduation, all my teachers told me I'd never make it. But I did and was sure to let them know. Nonetheless, I spent my whole life thinking that I am stupid, good for nothing, waste of life, just as these supposedly intelligent teachers told me. Who was I to question their assessment of me?

When I left our education system with whatever knowledge that had been bequeathed to me, I found myself ill equipped. No-one ever taught me to fill out a job application, write a resume', open a checking account, how to balance a checkbook, &c. &c. What was one of the biggest gaps in my education (and I see that it is still so for the youth today) was what the law is and when you are breaking a law and what the penalties are. Again, I'm not blaming the school for my current predicament. But, for instance, I didn't know that Pennsylvania had the death penalty, nor that presence at a crime makes you a co-conspirator that gives you the same penalty under the law that the main perpetrators get. This is information that young adults should have before becoming responsible for their own actions. Actions have consequences and those consequences are a big part of what we choose to do or not to do. I feel that educating the young people of this country on the law and other real life knowledge and skills will create a better overall populous, and a stronger community, specifically.

When I came to prison I started to learn for myself. I figured out how I learn and I applied myself. I've never been lazy, which is why I made it through Army training. I read fiction books, at first and then, when my comprehension got better, I moved up to the weightier subjects of history, art, religion, and even philosophy. I learned to think for myself, something never taught to me by anyone else. Shouldn't this be the first thing that a person is taught? To not do so is to raise up a bunch of robots that have no thoughts of their own and only parrot back whatever was pumped into them. This lack of problem-solving ability and deductive reasoning made me ripe for any person who felt like using me for their own ends. How was I to reason if whatever that person said was true? I did not know how to tell. One should not have to come to prison to get educated, but education should prevent incarceration. Nor should I had to do it on my own out of the school setting with no guidance from knowledgeable people who care about truth. The skill of reasoning, deduction, logic, cognition, these are critical not only to happiness but freedom. How can you be free if you are imprisoned by a lie?

I sincerely hope that whatever I've said in my own poor way will be helpful in creating a better tomorrow for everyone. Forgive me for anything I may have said that was offensive to you. I lack social graces.

Respectfully,

Kevin J. Marinelli

CC:PA.Dept.of  
Education

\* LOVE KNOWN AND FREED \*

I once had such a love  
as if sent from up above  
her voluptuous form I adored  
of her passions never bored  
our desires united in bliss  
heaven revealed in every kiss  
the strawberry of her lips  
the shape of her hips  
her soft and delicate hand  
on which I wished to place a band  
golden hair with locks of silk  
a complexion the color of milk  
the emerald of her eyes  
and the thickness of her thighs  
all this made the exterior  
of which there is none superior  
but within beat a heart of gold  
a kindness and gentleness to behold  
she gave herself fully to me  
though I violated that trust continually  
nobody ever taught me how to love  
how to cherish that blessed dove  
my stupidity drove me mad  
until I lost all I had  
I found myself forever caged  
without her embrace I raged  
though my love for her was strong  
no longer allowing to do her wrong  
I had to set my dear one free  
all along knowing it must be  
now my heart is shattered within me  
because that love is lost eternally.

\* LOVES EMBRACE \*

I relish her warth  
the weight of her body  
we lie spent from passion  
content in our loveris embrace  
our youthful bodies entwined  
I feel our souls joined  
"the two have become one "  
she is mine,I hers  
slaves surrendered to love  
April,my heart's desire  
consumed by passion's flame  
the world exists nomore  
only love,here and now  
time suspended in time  
now,love being eternal

## The Eternal Fight

In the darkest depths of night  
the Mysterious One takes flight  
flittering throughout my mind  
confusion making me blind  
the sun has set within my soul  
love has no more control  
why, when, where, and how  
is all my heart asks now  
faith resides in me no more  
even breathing becomes a chore  
my drowning spirit thrashes about  
is there anyone to help me out?  
fear arises as I grope in darkness  
panic as I await light's appearance  
is it all a great fraud?  
but how can one live without God?  
seeking God is my reason for life  
to endure the existence of strife  
I need faith to indwell me  
and God who makes me free  
without either one of these  
my soul will stagnate and freeze  
so, please God hear my plea  
from darkening confusion release me  
allow the sun to arise again  
and everything, anew, to begin

Everything has been made new  
Now it all relies on you  
Will you remain in this gloom  
Or depart to a brighter room?  
Will you wallow in despair  
Or seek for that fresher air?  
Turn again from doubt to faith in me  
Then you'll be free internally  
For a struggle continues on earth  
Only in heaven is eternal mirth  
But I will give you the strength you need  
With Christ you shall succeed indeed  
So raise your banner high  
Until Jesus descends from the sky  
Only then shall the war be won  
If you've fought on like a faithful son  
I've given you the armor for the job

Do not allow Satan your reward to rob  
Resist him in every guise  
All his evil deeds despise  
He comes masked as the true  
For he wishes to destroy you  
His lies are perversions of truth  
Because he was evil from his youth  
Beware of his cunning & experience  
In yourself have no confidence  
Rely on Me in all things  
To protect from the destruction he br  
Darkness is Satan's eternal abode  
Despair and hopelessness his mode  
So, rise up my child of light  
And do as I say-FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

## Tortured Soul

My thoughts never cease  
to torture my soul  
They seem to only increase  
spinning out of control  
In this man-made hell  
with no hope of relief  
A misery one cannot tell  
A soul's agony beyond belief

Execution would terminate  
the torturous ticking of time  
My sorrows to eliminate  
At the drop of a dime  
I desire that peaceful rest  
after this arduous existence  
Death I cannot request  
they desire my resistance

The court sentenced me to die  
I really wish I would  
But no matter how hard I try  
it seems I never could

Please, carry out that sentence  
that my weary soul wants  
I'd give them no resistance  
despite all their stunts

To acquiesce to that mercy  
causes lawyers and court to cry  
Your not "fit", but "crazy"  
truly they grievously lie  
Volunteering for torture  
is to choose this place  
So hellish is that future  
they'd never take my place

To rot, wither and decay  
is no way to live  
I wish not to stay  
so, rest to my soul give  
Madness is always near  
teetering on insanity  
Living my greatest fear  
a lonely, solitary destiny

When they had said "death"  
they were so very right  
Ever since I lost my breath  
out went the soul's light  
My heart is now dead  
abandoned and broken by grief  
I now repeat what I said  
grant this tortured soul relief.

## The Commander in Chief

There is a wordly chief  
Who raises himself above belief  
I know not what spirit he is of  
Nor if he is full of love  
His rewards are only for here  
While God's aren't as near  
He puts me in harm's way  
Unable to save the day  
He gives little compensation  
Because he's only an imitation  
I can only judge by what I see  
He's not the commander for me

I have one and only commander  
Among men, none grander  
Him alone do I obey  
And I wish to portray  
He commands me where to go  
And saves me from every foe  
He gives me the armor for war  
And provides weapons of honor  
To whom else shall I turn  
For Him does my heart burn  
When I leave this battlefield of life  
He shall quell all my life's strife  
I'm grateful He's my Commander in Chief  
Granting me heaven's final relief.

## Not Safe To Feel

My heart has a seal  
Made from bars of steel  
Where it's not safe to feel  
All that is, oh, so real  
I bottle it all up inside  
While here I must reside  
From emotions I can't hide  
Though I have so often tried  
When will it finally be  
That I can truly be free  
To feel all that's in me  
And be rid of this insanity  
A pervasive decaying force  
That has taken its course  
And became my life's curse  
As this torment I must nurse

\* MISTY TORRENTS \*

In the misty torrents of timely gloom  
I travel a life full of despair and doom  
My ignorance leads me to manly strife  
Curiosity stirs my soul to question life

Whispering on the winds I hear  
Wondering, to this I leand an ear:  
"Within the rustling leaves of time you'll find  
the answer to this curious plight of mankind."

Turning to where darkened corners lie  
Hidden vallies where pride must die  
I opened my eyes to inspired light  
Seeing the world with new sight

Deception no longer enslaves me  
Falsehood's shackles fall free  
Dispersing the misty torrents of life  
Revealing harmony and hope without strife

\* Camouflage \*

Every animal has a coat  
Not for which to gloat  
One that doesn't reveal  
But from predators to conceal  
Like Joseph's of many colors  
Not loved by his brothers  
Man has none of these  
Only skin which feels a breeze  
We err when we construe  
This exterior to be true  
It's a house in which we live  
For the spirit that God hath give  
The camouflage we take for real  
The soul we squash and steel  
At the expense of what's true  
That the camouflage is not you.

\* On the Wind \*

Voices call to prayer  
Warding away despair  
Not voices for hire  
But of the Spirit's fire  
From the heart they speak  
Of God's love they keep  
God in and above all  
No matter how big or small  
Loving the tiny and tall  
Love for and above all

Small voices on air  
Can never, ever compare  
To the reality they feel  
On their heart love's seal  
God's greatness unknowable  
His Person so loveable  
God's loving heart unphathomable  
His wonderous mercy unlimitable  
God's Patience without measure  
All this, God our treasure

RAINBOW OF HOPE

DISMAL, DARK  
FACING DOOM  
THIS DAY A  
RAINBOW BRIGHTENED MY GLOOM  
ARCHING HIGH IN THE SKY  
IT CAUSED A TWINKLE IN MY EYE  
HOPE GROWING IN MY HEART  
WHERE DOES IT END  
WHERE DOES IT START  
SHOW ME ITS MEANING  
SHOW ME ITS SOURCE  
CREATED BY GOD'S ETERNAL FORCE  
IN HIS STRENGTH  
IN HIS POWER  
IT'S EVIDENCE AFTER A SHOWER  
HOPE IS RENEWED ONCE MORE  
I'VE SEEN HE'S THERE FOR SURE  
WATCHING OVER YOU AND ME  
THE SIGN OF NOAH IS TRUE  
WHEN THE WORLD HAD A FALL  
GOD HAD TO DESTROY ALL  
SAVING ONLY THE RIGHTEOUS HE WOULD  
SAVING THE RIGHTEOUS AS HE SHOULD  
PROMISING DESTRUCTION BY WATER NEVER AGAIN  
THAT'S THE BIRTH OF THE RAINBOW, WHEN IT BEGAN  
A COVENANT IN THE SKY  
A SIGN THAT DOESN'T LIE  
GIVING ALL THE STRENGTH TO COPE  
THE RAINBOW OF HOPE!

\* WATCHER \*

GUARDIAN ANGEL  
WATCHER OF OLD  
PROTECTOR OF BODY  
PROTECTOR OF SOUL  
STANDS WITH YOU ALWAYS  
AND STANDS BOLD  
STRENGTH OF GOD  
MIGHT UNTOLD  
FOREVER  
TRUE  
WATCHING OVER YOU

\* loneliness \*

The lonely heart dies from lack of love  
But not from our Creator up above  
Feelings of depression and gloom ensue  
All the result of a distorted view  
When emotions of abandonment arrive  
For thoughts of love we must strive  
Bringing what's in darkness to light  
Seeking that love which never takes flight  
God's love for you will never die  
Never abandoning you from on high  
So, brighten your mind and heart with this  
At every moment your soul does God kiss

\* Help for the Lonely Heart \*

O loving God so good and true  
Touch this lonely heart so blue  
With your wonderous might  
Enfold me in your wings tonight  
Whispering encouraging words to my soul  
All those things to make me whole  
Strengthening me from the dark  
That to the light I may embark  
My soul to know joy and peace again  
Such happiness from You within.

Dear Alcohol

O my dear friend  
I embraced you so  
Wherever you were  
there I'd go.  
I figured you were  
all I'd ever need,  
My every thought &  
desire you'd feed.

With you there was  
nothing I wouldn't do  
All my inhibitions were  
gone because of you.  
I perceived a canyon  
as a tiny lil' crack,  
Oceans as puddles  
when you had my back.

Little did I know  
that all was false,  
My dearest friend  
lacked a pulse.  
He cared not for me  
because he couldn't feel,  
All I thought so small  
wasn't even real.

I let my perceptions  
be distorted and altered,  
All my logical reason  
was lost and faltered.  
I'm bruised and tattered  
from all my doin's,  
Now my life lies  
destroyed, in ruins.

The one I thought  
was my friend,  
Ended up being a  
fiend to the end.  
Trust me when I say:  
Alcohol is not your friend  
Alcohol is a dead end.

## I'm Country

whether you are country  
is less about geography  
and more about mentality  
that's what makes you country.

You may never see a farm  
nor work with your arm  
but having that country charm  
will do you no harm.

You may never live in the hills  
nor the fields with sheep fill  
but having that hospitality still  
will do you no ill

I come from a miner's town up north  
but I was southern country from birth  
learnt the country and hill-billy worth  
to live life in simplicity and mirth

We stand proud and tall  
considerate of one and all  
in need, on us you can call  
we'll help you after a fall

About family and nation we care  
with much kindness and love to spare  
tread on us if you dare  
poorly shall you certainly fare

Never mind your family tree  
if you want to be country  
take on that mentality  
that's what makes you country

## Pain Made Me

Every tear I cried  
Each part that died  
Caused a change in me  
Without pain who would I be?  
Every hurt and bruised feeling  
Each torn and tattered dream  
Has established the bedrock  
Without which who would I be?  
Broken and battered I bleed  
From every unfulfilled need  
Struggling to hold onto me  
Without all who would I be?  
Every whimpering cry  
Each broken sigh  
Questioning all I feel  
Without it who would I be?  
I see it so clearly today  
All that caused such decay  
IS what has formed me  
Without pain who would I be?

An empty shell of me.

## I Believed You

I believed all you told me  
All the lies you sold me  
How was I to know  
'Twas nought but show  
Parroting what you heard  
With not an original word  
Never asked what's true  
They deluded you  
Then you deceived me  
So that I couldn't see  
All of it wasn't real  
My sanity you did steal  
Trading truth for lies  
As one's spirit dies  
Now the consequences I feel  
Housed in a cage of steel

## Finding the Real You

I see the world through bars and wire  
A life of freedom to which I aspire  
My restraints are not made of steel  
But of something much more real  
Forged by scars and walls rooted in pain  
The loss of things I can't regain

How can I once again be free  
Experiencing all the world with glee  
Who now possesses the golden key  
So that I'm able to just be me  
When will I be pulled from this mire  
Such sweet release I truly desire

Seeking desperately for such relief  
My soul being filled with grief  
I haven't sought the answer within  
For transforming healing to begin  
Strength and courage it will take  
To confront all that's painful or fake

"Kow thy Self" is the highest ideal  
A journey of little appeal  
The greatest struggle deep within  
Hoping for courage to begin  
Such an enormously complex task  
"Where do I start?", I ask

Looking deep inside this shell  
There is something more I can tell  
An ethereal principle resides there  
That nothing material can compare  
From where it comes or goes  
This nobody really knows

I am not this flesh I can see  
But the spirit residing in me  
When this husk dies I'll be free  
Who then will I truly be?  
It is of no nation, race or religion  
These are not it's original origin

It existed long before any of these  
And will out live them with ease  
I seek for it's ultimate source  
To follow it back on that course  
This is the work of a lifetime  
To be done by all mankind

To this end we all desire  
Even though we may tire  
May we help each other rest  
Knowing that it's a test  
For if the souls source is above  
It's course is probably LOVE

### Real Love

As I recline in my room  
I think of this tune  
All that it said  
Ricochets in my head  
About love and stuff  
Things we hear enough  
I desire what we can do  
Little acts to show you  
Love is oh so deep  
Not frilly and cheap  
Such love should be shown  
As hatred we disown  
This love I have for you  
So love another, too.

## Thoughts for Peace

In the darkest gloom  
As I await my doom  
Imprisoned in this tomb  
My thoughts race about  
Flitting from doubt to doubt  
Trying to figure it out  
Issues of such gravity  
Never before accured to me  
Until I wasn't free  
Now I have time to think  
From wisdom's fountain drink  
With knowledge form a link  
Religion, philosophy & mysticism  
Breed only cynicism  
Each man's own relativism  
Let love be our way  
And peace exist today  
While forgiveness leads the fray  
There's no law against these  
Which create only ease  
Let us all try it, please  
Terminate hatred somehow  
Let go of grudges now  
Remove "self" as our sacred cow  
What more can be said?  
Without action we're all dead  
May this poem be more than just read

Ode to the King

You are the Eternal King  
To which we shall sing  
You are the Most Holy One  
Father, Spirit and Saving Son

To God this ode we proclaim  
Saved by the Blessed Name  
Of the Only Begotten of God  
So the heavenly path we trod

Worthy of all Glory and Praise  
To You our hearts we raise  
Loving You for Yourself  
Loving You and no One else

We deserve nothing by Your Hand  
But receive all at Your command  
Even the Most Beautiful Jesus  
By Whom You graciously saved us

We shall praise God forever  
For that final endeavor  
Which bought our wretched soul  
That we may be made whole.

## *Capitalism, Materialism, and the Poor*

The world is being poisoned. Not only that, but we administer the toxic elixir willingly. I believe that most of us recognize this suicidal concoction for what it is, too. Nonetheless, we give all to aid in our own destruction. However, there are others who have been duped by the fancy packaging, flamboyant advertisement, and wide popularization of this insidious solution. Just as somebody would intervene to stop another from ingesting bleach, so too we must wake up to what we have really been imbibing.

Of course, the "poison" of which I speak is not literal poison, but a metaphor for the materialism of our era. With the rise of capitalism, materialism became more prevalent — with good reason, too. When money, the "bottom line," and possessions are the sole indicators of success (and success is prized above all else), the individual is lost and even trampled upon to achieve the desired goal. When the profit margin isn't great enough to satisfy the materialist's desire, then he must raise prices or layoff workers, not caring that this affects others negatively. It's all about the cold, hard numbers. Employers don't provide adequate health care (if any) to their workers because it reduces their profits — never mind

that it's the right thing to do or that people can't live off their meager salaries without adding to it outrageously high doctor bills. It has nothing to do with the human being, but with the gain to be had from the labor that that person provides to enrich the coffers of the bourgeoisie at any cost. The working class isn't even treated as well as farm animals, which see a veterinarian when sick— horses are shod, cleaned, housed and given enough food and water. What kind of world do we live in when we treat animals better than human beings?

The lower classes (to use capitalist terminology) haven't helped themselves much either. They've bought the lie that capitalism is for all, which it's not. Where is the poor person going to get the education AND money to start a business? "You have to have money to make money," as they say. And who is to say that everyone is born with the intellect and aptitude to be an entrepreneur; so, then he's relegated to a life of poverty through no fault of his own. The very basis of this system is based on the premise that there are employers & employees. If everyone was a business owner there'd be nobody to do the labor. So, the fat-cats just sit around getting fatter as the poor get poorer.

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America was founded because of money, not liberty. The decisive vent in American history was the Boston Tea Party, which was the rich's rebellion against England for too high taxes — money! However, the founders (rich persons all), convinced everyone they were fighting for freedom, but unwittingly taking on a new royalty as masters — the elite 10 percent that control 90 percent of the wealth. And if anybody, 'til this day, threatens their authority (stock market, oil fields, etc.), it's seen as a threat to liberty, freedom, and the "American way."

Case in point: When Senator Clinton proposed free health care for everyone, she was shouted down as a socialist, communist, and enemy of the country, because it would be too expensive. Even though it's the right thing to do, we can't afford it;\* but we had no problem bombing Iraq, starting a war that has cost hundreds of billions of dollars, since THAT was the right thing to do.

Our civilization is claimed to be based upon this Roman system and we are going the way of the Romans — the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. Of course, the poor were the army, and when they got sick of it, and the barbarians

came a'knocking, they stepped aside and let them in. Today we find ourselves in the same situation. Capitalism exploits the less fortunate to their own ends while claiming all men are created equal. As Orwell might add, "...but some are more equal than others."

After the bourgeoisie firmly planted in the minds of the masses their false ideology, they then convinced us to be "consumers" which feed the beast. We create our own poison, if you will, and they charge us for it. So, we *Buy! Buy! Buy!*, trying to look and feel like we are our own masters even though we are slaves to the system (for, "You are the slave of whatever overcomes you," wrote St. Paul). Loans are taken out, mortgages made, and credit cards charged; all sinking you further into bondage to the user — a unique parasite that feeds off one's desire to have, possess, acquire and consume beyond their means, to keep up with the Joneses. We **MUST** have two cars, fancy clothes, all types of diversions like big screen tvs, video games, ATVs, etc., etc., even though we don't own the ground we're standing on because we got two mortgages and enough credit card debt to choke a horse. All to what end? You can't take it with you...

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The teachers of all the great religions spoke directly to this. Jesus said, "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?" Buddha taught that "desire is the beginning of all suffering," and the Quran says, "Abundance diverts you until you come to the grave." We have lost our souls, been diverted from the true meaning of life, and are possessed by our possessions. It is one thing to provide for your needs, or the needs of others, and quite another matter to cater to every want or desire. Our possessions don't change who we really are inside, under it all. A new car won't make you beautiful, nor new, expensive clothes skinnier; a big house doesn't make you better than anyone else, just more superficial and egotistical. When you look in the mirror it's still the same person staring back. So, what do you want your legacy to be? One of shallow materialism, or an abiding lover of neighbor and self?

As the saying goes, "You came into the world with nothing and leave with nothing." Well, almost nothing, since your good deeds remain forever, resonating throughout time. Look at our dear blessed Mother Teresa, who, like her Savior, died penniless but left a legacy of love,

mercy, and compassion that will never die. Of course we all can't live the austere existence of Mother Teresa, but we can find courage from her example to simplify our lives, maintain our human dignity in the midst of the rat race, and help our fellow man. We need to spend less time slaving for "the man" so we can drive a BMW instead of a Saturn, and more time with our family or helping the elderly, sick, and poor. Lets live a life that will leave a legacy of love in the minds and hearts of all we touch.

*\*Note from the author:* Although, Canada has socialized health care and their economy is better than ours. At this time, their currency is worth \$1.06 compared to ours, worth 40 cents.

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## A Son's Love

A son's love is greater than any other  
that is, his love of his mother  
How can I explain it to you  
all else drops out of view  
It is grander than that "grand" canyon  
deeper than the deepest phathom  
It is brighter than the brightest sun  
prettier than a day just begun  
It is more beautiful than the most beautiful flower  
higher than the highest tower  
It is stronger than the strongest metal  
more delicate than a rose's petal  
It is more gentle than the gentlest breeze  
easily moved with the greatest ease  
It is softer than the softest kiss  
more joyful than the greatest bliss  
It is more glorious than the stars on high  
more spacious than the wide open sky  
What else can be said for it  
A son's love will never quit  
There is no love more pure and true  
than my love, mother, for you.

## The Broken Heart

A heart broken, battered, bleeding  
In desperate need of healing  
Too wounded to care  
All love leaked from there

A broken vessel can't hold  
Or venture to be so bold  
As to love once again  
Not knowing where to begin

Too scarred to trust  
With a heart turned to dust  
That withered long ago  
Never recovered from the blow

When you let the sunshine through  
There's nothing you can't do  
Even mend that broken heart  
That was brutally torn apart

Let the healing begin  
Allowing light and water in  
That it may grow anew  
Into all you once knew

Then happiness will return  
And love's fires again burn  
Purifying that injured past  
Believing this heart will last

## Powerless

Control is power  
hour by hour  
reigning from its tower

I have no control  
in this little hole  
all power they stole

Helplessly I sigh  
its futile to try  
this ruthlessness to decry

Frustration abounds  
while hopelessness hounds  
this inhumanity astounds

I have no clue  
what I can do  
but turn to YOU

In that is power  
hour by hour  
God reigning from his tower

Only He can help  
this little whelp  
as I continuously yelp

Powerless am I  
except when I cry  
to that Mighty Power on High

Thank You (Pen-Pals)

Reaching into the dark  
Where I'm set apart  
You have created a spark  
In this gloomy heart

Compassion in this place  
Is so very hard to find  
While this reality I face  
YOU decided to be kind

A little ink on paper  
Seems such a small thing  
A human connection  
Sometimes its everything

Inexplicably you cared for me  
Though we have never met  
Touching my humanity  
Not knowing what you'd get

You accepted my brokenness  
My disturbing past  
Showering it with gentleness  
And friendship at last

May God Bless You  
And all that you do  
For I am no longer blue  
Thanks to you, being you.

Discovering who we are

Futility exists in the heart  
Vanity in the eyes  
Foolishness in the mind  
Stubbornness in the will  
Love resides in the soul

Truth is found with the heart  
Love by the will  
Wisdom in the soul  
Purity by the mind  
Beauty in the eyes

To seek is to find  
When looking aright  
Finding is to know  
When desiring aright  
And knowing is to intuit  
When feeling aright

The soul yearns for truth  
The heart needs it  
The mind seeks it  
The will guides it  
The whole being desires it

Feeling confuses the mind  
Doubt weakens the will  
Vanity blinds the eye  
Desire destroys the soul  
Thinking dulls the heart  
Love is all we are

Peace in Time

As my head loses its cover  
And my hands their grip  
As my hair loses its color  
And my thoughts their grasp

Youth is a faded memory  
A past full of sorrow and regret  
it seemed so temporary  
Something I thought I'd forget

As my height is bent  
And my hinges rusted  
As my form is spent  
And my windows busted

The past is a dim reality  
Only the joys forgotten  
Lost in youthful futility  
While hurts turn rotten

As my years grow long  
And my time drags on  
As my pain gets strong  
And my haunted life lives on

I've learned from the mistakes  
That I can't change the past  
Forgiveness is what it takes  
To obtain a peace that lasts

## In Limbo

I exist in a state  
Not yet sealed by fate  
Where hope is very slim  
And that hope only in HIM  
I cannot mourn what is gone  
Nor let go and move on  
My hope drives me along  
To endure all that feels wrong  
Giving up is to die  
Too much hope is a lie  
I accept what is past  
Without hope I won't last  
Is there a future for me?  
How do I live this mystery?  
There's no plans for a tomorrow  
Only assurance of more sorrow  
Where do I go from here?  
Where's the end, is it near?  
Just uncertainty do I know  
In instability I try to grow  
Stuck between the future and past  
Please end this limbo at last.

### Longing for Love

There's a longing in me I can't fulfill  
At times it makes me mentally ill  
I yearn for a love so divine  
Somebody to love who is all mine  
Who desires my exclusive company  
And thinks about me constantly  
The thought of whom makes me glad  
Driving away the tears when I'm sad  
One that melts away my stress  
Calming me with the slightest curress  
Being my heart's sole refuge  
Without any fear of subterfuge  
Whose smile makes my day  
And is a blessing in every way  
With whom every second is bliss  
But when I'm not with I deeply miss  
Which I could smother with affection  
And make a deep and lasting connection  
To be my closest, best friend  
Faithful and true to the very end  
Who I could trust with my every thought  
And their love could never be thought  
There's only one place such love is found  
With God, whose love does abound  
For all who fervently seek Him out  
God's love is not in doubt.

## LOVE

What is Love? Where does it come from? We cannot see it, yet it exists. It cannot be weighed or measured, although the scientist says it's only a chemical reaction. Love is a maddening force that brings us to the heights of irrationality and yet the sublimest of charity. It constantly gives of itself and yet is never diminished. What is this "love"? It is self-sacrificing yet never dies. Most psychoses come from either the inability to give or receive love. Psychoses are a defect of love. Love produces and creates, always reaching beyond itself. But where does it come from? Love arises up in us as if it was always there, like the seed germinating until it bursts forth to the light; reaching up until it is consumed by the light and brings forth its fruit, that ambrosia of love. And it has an infinite number of expressions - between spouses, friends, family; for God, country and the lonely or outcaste; it is compassion, empathy and intimacy. It is limitless in variety. Love never gets old and we never tire of it. O this love! How we yearn for it, and we are not satisfied without it. Love makes us whole. But love that is for itself is not love at all. Love always extends outward. To love is to be defenseless. No one is more vulnerable than the one who loves. It takes courage and trust, trust in love not the one loved. Objects can't be loved because the object is an end in itself. Love has no end, it is eternal. It doesn't know of self. Love seeks out more love waiting in the other. The lonely cry cries out for love, with tears and with rage. Action not guided by love is violence (love gone bad), rage is emotion not guided by love (love misunderstood). Jealousy is love turned sour, and obsession is love gone mad. Love is of the will. Lust, infatuation and desire aren't love though usually called by that name. The mind often doesn't desire to love but the will wills to love. Love is divine. When we love we are the most like God for God is love. Know God, Know Love/know love, know God. No God, no Love/  
no Love, no God.

BUT GOD SAID

The world said I look awful  
But God said I'm so beautiful

The world said I'm unintelligent  
But God said I'm so brilliant

The world said I'll never be anything  
But God said I've given you everything

The world said I'm unruly and wild  
But God said I'm His beloved child

The world said "You can't do it"  
But God said I'll pull you through it

The world said You can't do anything right  
But God said I've already won that fight

The world said you don't fit in  
But God said My love is all-embracin'

The world said you are here alone  
But God said My presence is easily known

The world said this life has no meaning  
But God said that this world is fleeting

The world said to live for yourself  
But God said He is love itself

The world said that material things really matter  
But God said that the spiritual is far better

The world said and I refused to hear  
But God said and drove out my fear.

The world said all that produces hate  
But God said that love is my fate

The world said war will never cease  
But God said all that leads to peace

The world said and then faded away  
But God said and is here eternally to stay.

What's with all the Hate

Curses and racial slurs  
Ravings of some dope  
What's with all the hate  
Where's the hope?  
Worthless rantings  
Ragings of ignorance  
Disunity reigns  
People seek vengeance

What's with all the hate  
Where's the hope?  
Misdirected anger  
Wounds of old  
Digging up the past  
Soul gone cold

What's with all the hate  
Where's the hope?  
Feelings of hopelessness  
Now running through  
Looking for answers  
Don't know what to do

Where's all the hate  
Where's the hope?  
Truth residing in me  
Found human unity  
The reason for love to be  
For all things, Harmony

No more hate  
Nothing but hope!

\* Ashes Remain \*

You can't take it with you when you leave  
All you have is what you believe  
Money, Beauty and Fame cannot save  
They only make you a slave

So hold onto what is true  
Because all those things aren't you  
Faith, Hope and Love try to obtain  
For in the end only ashes remain.

The Choice

Faking, fronting, posturing galore  
The ways of the World at your door.  
What's cool, hip or in style  
Only lasts for a while.  
Public opinion means nothing,  
Riches are fleeting.  
Pleasure is for a moment  
Ending in disappointment.  
Choices must be made,  
Time won't make it fade:  
Letting the world define you  
Or let the real you come through,  
Being yourself or another,  
Being Christ's or Satan's brother.  
Choosing the eternal  
Or trading it for the temporal.

The Cost

Done wrong  
you sure know  
totally lost  
nowhere to go  
seeking forgiveness  
not deserved  
living in torment  
sorrow unreserved.  
feeling helpless  
unable to amend.

saying sorry  
never enough  
willing to end  
grieving loss  
death and life-  
one to a grave  
another to strife.  
dying daily  
forever lost,  
counting always  
the perpetual cost.

Off to War

You saw your son off to war  
And waved good-bye once more  
Remembering his first day of school  
When you looked such the fool  
Sent him with hugs and kisses and all  
Recalling how he looked so small  
Now he is a grown man  
And you saw him off again  
With hugs and kisses and all  
Boy he's grown so tall  
He goes to help all others  
Sons and daughters, mothers and brothers  
Fighting for freedom, peace and justice  
The basic rights of all of us  
So dry your teary tide  
For God is by his side  
Protecting him in every way  
To return to you some day

My Name is...

Beyond the healed bones  
from "sticks and stones"  
the pain still remains  
My Name is...hurt

Beyond the chastity lost  
there lingers a cost  
a scarring of the soul  
My Name is...shame

Beyond the crime done  
and the repentance won  
sorrow has not died  
My Name is...grief

Beyond the addiction broken  
and the apologies spoken  
a shattered life yet exists  
My Name is...regret

Beyond disease diagnosed  
a life's misery confirmed  
a stricken body felt  
My Name is...pain

Beyond a love mourned  
a heart left unadorned  
and dryless tears  
My Name is...lonely

Beyond all that's desired  
belief like raging fire  
a glimmer remains  
My Name is...faith

Beyond what is seen  
and everything between  
you push on and on  
My Name is...hope

Beyond the prayers said  
and scriptures read  
a heart full of joy  
My Name is...love

The Holy Bible

The Holy Bible  
given to us by God  
Contains the right path  
one ought to trod.  
His decrees are just  
His ways are true,  
it's a loveletter  
written for you.  
Learn, love and live  
all that's within,  
And it'll keep you  
from the travails of sin.  
Trust in God's word  
no matter what will be  
For in it is salvation,  
truth that sets free.

### Prison is...

Prison is loneliness in a crowd  
hunger that can't be fed  
thirst never satiated  
desire unfulfilled  
Prison is emotions you can't feel  
beauty unappreciated  
talented undiscovered  
love unexpressed  
Prison is not really being seen  
knowing abandonment  
feeling only loss  
continually despairing  
Prison is the grain fallen to the ground  
the sowing for a better harvest  
realizations or a brighter tomorrow  
a womb awaiting rebirth  
Prison is the way you do your time  
the thoughts you cultivate  
the feelings you feed  
the emotions you harbor  
Prison is what you make of it.

### The World's Example

I came into this world a clean slate  
With nothing like destiny or fate  
Written on by time and experience  
Taught by institutions ideas for adherence  
I saw injustice and hypocrisy all around  
I suffered pain, loss and heard lies without count  
Deception and evil was taught from the start  
To a child's pure and innocent heart  
Then came the clear inevitable truth  
Of this misshapen and troubled youth  
Nothing good in you can grow  
When a world without love is all you know.

## My Gaurdian Angel

As I lie in complete solitude  
with weighed spirit and despairing mood  
I imagine my gaurdian's concern  
How his heart must yearn  
to comfort and help me now  
all the while not knowing how  
So he lies down by my side  
and spreads his wings wide  
wrapped in which I hide  
from all in life I can't abide  
I know he's always there for me  
lighting the way so I may see  
He goes beyond his assignment  
gaurding me in this confinement  
Many times I ignore his guidance  
living a life of defiance  
but he constently remains true  
no matter what I do  
He is the one I can't see  
the gaurdian Angel God gave me.

\* I Am (in prison)\*

I am as good as "a brain in a vat"  
And the torso of all that  
Arms too short to reach beyond the wall  
Legs that won't make me that tall  
Left to wither and lonely die  
When comfort and freedom in so nigh  
I am a prisoner of mercy lost  
A warehoused human without cost  
A result of society's mess  
This they shall never confess  
With them is where I belong  
From them I learned to do wrong  
I am a product of compassion denied  
From their emotions they hide  
Revenge is the eternal cry  
"He has done wrong so he must die"  
If their life was judged and tried  
Then "mercy!" they'd have cried  
I am the reflection which doesn't deceive  
The end of all you believe:  
A culture of greed, lust and violence  
The offspring of a demonic alliance  
My acquiesance to all you do  
Now imprisoned as an image of you.

## You Put Me In Prison...

You taught me humans descended from animals  
but when I acted like it, you put me in prison  
You taught me morals were relative  
but when I acted like it, you put me in prison  
You taught me that people are objects to be used  
but when I acted like it, you put me in prison  
You taught me money and fame are all that matters  
but when I acted like it, you put me in prison  
You taught me that God doesn't exist  
but when I acted like it, you put me in prison  
You taught me there is no afterlife  
but when I acted like it, you put me in prison  
You taught me to be violent  
but when I acted like it, you put me in prison  
You taught me the judicial system is fair  
but when I acted like it, you put me in prison

YOU TAUGHT ME AND THEN YOU PUT ME IN PRISON

### Wisdom

Wisdom is informed right action. Knowledge can be the same in two people but one breaks the law and ends up in jail while the other obeys the law and remains free. The only difference is right action, not knowledge. Arrogance is the killer of wisdom. The two cannot exist simultaneously. Intellectual pride will smother wisdom, thinking oneself wise they become a fool. Humility is the catalyst for wisdom - "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; "To say 'I don't know' is the beginning of wisdom". Knowledge is brought on by time and understanding through experience. The young know nothing while the old are knowledgeable; The young have little experience, therefore not compassionate while the old empathize from vast experience. The mind of the wise is supple and pliable, molded by truth. Passion does not move wisdom, it doesn't conform to nothing but its goal - the good, the true, the right. To be compassionate is to act wisely toward the other, knowing from experience. To be wise is to have a pattern of right action, to consistently choose the right response in every situation. Wisdom is as wisdom does, but not the wisdom of this world. Be wise and Live. The wisdom of the world is death to the spirit, but true wisdom gives life to the spirit. Wisdom is courageous, the wise never fear, because wisdom strengthens and encourages them. Wisdom acts fairly, knowing what is right, the wise act equally, without bias or favoritism. Once the truth is known the wise follow it, wherever it may lead.