



ONE SOPA

**WRITING FROM THE HEART FOR
NOURISHING THE SOUL**



Cover Art by Seth Salinas

One Sopa: Writing From the Heart for Nourishing the Soul

Selections from the Gavilan College's Wednesday Writing Workshop
offered to San Benito County Jail's B and C Pods

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Gate 9

By Seth Salinas

One day I will hit the gate
When will it be my time, who knows?
But freedom will be my fate

Freedom is what my mind makes
I can feel it in my toes
One day I will hit the gate

Until then, I cannot wait
But I hear only laughing from crows
But freedom will be my fate

One day will be my day
I can feel it in my heart
So, one day I will hit the gate

Until then I watch the clock
Tick tock from my bunk
But my freedom will be my fate

But until then I think about
Outside and how it's going to be
One day I will hit the gate
But freedom will be my fate

Paradise or Hell

By Navi

I have been to paradise and I have been to hell.

I am back in hell wondering how the fuck did I get here again. I blame everyone, but the truth is, I am here because of me.

I will get back to paradise. Oh yes, I will. I know what to do. I have been there before. It is so beautiful. That is my goal.

Life is simple—follow the rules. There is a sunset at the end of everyday, and when you share it with your loved one that is paradise.

Stay in your lane and don't speed, and you will be rewarded for your good deeds.

Paradise or hell—you make the choice.

I choose paradise.

Your Choice

By Navi

Freedom is only a few feet away. I see it freedom everyday. It is on the side of the door. But it is not my time to go. I sit here in this pod and see all these people go through the door. I am happy for them; I really am because they are getting that chance to see freedom, but how many times do they need before they see the door close for all eternity.

I have done time next to people with life, and one thing you keep to yourself is that day you see freedom. Don't take it for granted because it might not be there one day. Make good choices before you run out.

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My Freedom

By Jesse



Image by Nick Strader

I can feel my freedom.

Hell, yeah, it's been a long month but it's the 4th quarter.

I am about to go in to O.T. When I get out I'll have no probation. Well, at least not formal probation so when I get out any day now it's all up to me. Footha it's a trip. This is a day I thought I'd probably never see. But check it out, the judge kind of gave me a little leniency

Now it's up to me. I want to perfect the arts of haircuts or fades but it's all up to me. I've been given tools by SBC like privileges to be a college student. Trip out, at Gav I got a new number and guess what? It starts with the letter G. So thank you to all the teachers who came through: Mrs. A; Ms. Kimberly; and Gabby. Thank you to you three. Next time you see me it will be at Gavilan posted like a G (LOL JK).

I'm going to soak up everything that I can so I can stay sober and free.

Me and My Bunkie

By your boy young Tuck aka Chuy Tucan

Shit what up I'm Tucan
I sleep all day and I only wake up for food and coffee

This Nigga told me this name
But I won't say it cuz that Nigga crazy

Me and my Bunkie
Fuck, guess what? I'm back in jail
Who the fuck do I see? My old Bunkie
We chilled on the calles, but guess what? We're Bunkies again.

Me and my Bunkie
We back in this bitch but this time this loco shot me cletcha
And now I stepped up my game
Now that's how I roll

Me and my Bunkie
We talk about being righteous and getting right with the family, but
we both need God
So we can fuck shit up and double our money fa sho.

We now talk about getting and staying out through God's will
We will prevail

This one for my Bunkies
To all you fools
I love you Nigga no-homo
Y'all my bros though

Introduction

Every week she asked us, "What kind of writer are you?" and every week many of us answered, "We're just here for the milestones." Now here we sit at the end of yet another semester, and it seems this class has reached us. We are strong, deep, and powerful writers who express ourselves from the heart.

We will not forget this classroom and a favorite saying, "This sucks, this sucks, this sucks." We were invited to write it over and over again whenever we got stuck until a new thought emerged, and sooner or later one always arrived. We learned to surprise and sometimes delight ourselves with the ideas and expressions within our own minds.

Many of us are here because we were found guilty of committing a crime. We've been court-ordered to serve a sentence. Others are here awaiting their day in court. Either way we're doing time and counting the minutes, hours, and days is uncomfortable at best.

Injustice is an awful thing the mind can use to make us feel trapped, alone, and often hopeless. When someone is inside an institution, locked away, society seems to automatically think, "Ha! They did it." When, in fact, often the exactly the opposite is true.

Whatever the circumstances of our being here, it turns out humility is one way to find a center within. Meditation has helped some of us in more ways than one. We have learned we shouldn't judge ourselves and each other based only on our past experiences. Rather, we see how we can grow from what has happened to us and what we have done to others. We often vow never to make the same mistakes again.

Whether you are a reader within or outside the walls of San Benito County Jail we ask that whenever you reflect back on your own past actions, recognize in so doing you are not alone. We too think back and have learned that beauty and patience can be created and achieved during even times of difficulty and distress. As inmates, we have learned it is possible to feel connection even during detention and isolation away from families and friends.

We now have time to ask ourselves, "What is our purpose?" Some might believe that the actual events and turmoil in our lives make it impossible to gain control of our selves and that longing for a world outside is overwhelming.

Yes, it can be difficult to maintain self control when discipline isn't nourishing, and it feels as if the flow of life continues to escape us, but within it all we hear a faint sound. There is a difference between acceptance and understanding.

Accepting something blindly will not fill the voids in our lives. Because of this we've learned to welcome obstacles and challenges. They have become our opportunities. This is the motivation that becomes the fuel driving our lives. We have learned to ask ourselves, "Is it possible to overcome our experiences? If we apply ourselves, can we meet a higher set of expectations?" Yes, we believe, we can.

This class is much more than a writing group; it is unchimaka—a mother. It showed us how to dig deep and put pencil to paper. We are now dreamers, creative mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and grandparents, loving caring people that are also poets and all kinds of writers. We hold love and respect for all who make this opening for our creative minds possible.

Through it, we get a chance to look at our inner lives and realize how much more we need to love ourselves. What greater gift can a mother hear than that her son or daughter may have finally figured it out. If not, at least she knows here in jail we are trying and in a relatively safe, sober, and clean environment.

We get chances. For example, a chance to make peace with God through Big Ben Caputo, a preacher who comes to minister to us and share his bird and cat stories. Our eyes begin to open through all this just as Gate Nine will do for each us one day in the future.

Justice finds a way to feed positive energy to mind, body, and soul as soon as you allow it to be set free within you. It is like waves that are in sync with the stars above. One day our lives will no longer be controlled by hardships and drugs and we too will be one with freedom.

—Written by the writers of San Benito County Jail's B and C Pods

Rose Above the Rest

By Mikio Espinoza

My number one, you're the best by **FAR**
I got you, no matter where we **GO**
Keeping you forever, the future is **US**
Everyday I'll give you the best of **ME**

The Nopal that Grew from Concrete

By Chuy



Image by Chuy Tucan

“Compassion brings courage and
courage brings true happiness”
—from *How to Sit*, by Thich Nhat Hahn

The first time I got locked up I was 17. I was the seed of a nopal locked up in juvie. I got out, got some sun, but a few years later I got locked up again. This time I’m fucked up in SBC Jail. I was a nopalito growing up partly in jail. At first, I was scared but through the system I’m still trying to prevail. I’ve never done probation, but now, at 29, I’m asking for one more time, so I can shine. I’m now a nopal growing from concrete. Now doing time is easy, I got food, hygiene, and education. Now, through doing all this time one things for sure is this is my last time. If I need to explain more, we need more time. Straight up—I’m a nopal that grew from concrete

—inspired by Tupac’s- The “Rose that Grew from Concrete”

In the Depth with the Demons



Image by Damian Rivas

Mind from a Lost Soul

By Cameron Barney

Being a native decent of two tribes
Can make time fly or pass you by
It likes to make the mind wonder with different vibes

My mind is racing while it hides
I sit and wonder, Oh my
Being a native descendant of two tribes

Depends on rhyming on either good or bad vibes
Can make you decide to die or fly right by
It likes to make the mind wonder with different vibes

Deep inner meditation is something I really love to do
I really have my mind racing as I write to you
Being a native descendant of two tribes

Reiki energy is an amazing way to release the mind
Have you ever tried to wonder what is in your mind?
Tibetans monks gave me my ways to pray

My native descendants told me what to say
Being a Native descendant of two tribes
It likes to make the mind wonder with different vibes

Put Me in Jail, and I Will Still Win

By Chuy Tucan

Every day I wonder about what I am going to accomplish to better myself, as a person mentally and physically. Everyday I try to do at least one thing better than I did yesterday, especially while I am in jail because this is when I have time to actually think clearly and see things positively because I have a clouded thinking due to substance abuse. It's all about bettering myself to grow mentally as a man. Basically its using downtime for the better me as a human being and going back to being the real me—Jesus Antonio Casillas or my alias Tucan from Hollister.

Battle Cry

By Ron S.

The jail is alive! It's a monster with a deep thump, thump—a heart beat. You can feel the monster as if you're a part of its insides. The nostrils flaring as he breathes in and out, outwardly exhaling only to flare his nostrils again, preparing for battle with every breath! The sound of the thumping faster and faster while you hear the outward sounds of battle. Sword clanging against a shield in a timely fashion with each inward flair of breath, nostrils, and thumping heart—all of it—a symphony of war.

The River that I Miss So Much

By Fantasma

The River that I miss so much, a lot of people say it's evil down there, but it's people who are evil. At the same I think, it's not them. It could be spirits, lost like I am in my addiction, smoking meth. That's what we all do night and day. Sometimes we argue over the things we take, for things neither one has bought, yet we fight. Fighting is the only way we get to stay. Don't you see, it's the drugs we smoke everyday? People come and go but only hard ones get to stay. My enemy is not you; it's me. That's why I always go back, and my so-called friends always welcome my return.

In California

By Young Tuck Chuy Casillas

In California
In California bud smells bomb
In California Bud grows beautiful
In California Gregory Isaacs sounds relaxing
In California bud makes me feel IRITE
In California Bud feels sticky gooey
In California I feel close to Babylon and Zion



Image by Seth Salinas

This Class

By Navi O

This class is a trip. I think the teachers name should be Dr. Pepper even though she likes pink lemonade.

Dr. Pepper's assistant name is Willow Leopard Bascom. I think they are dog people.

It is funny because I live off Bascom in San Jose. I am always riving on Bascom or even riding on electric scooters on Bascom.

When I walk on Bascom I like to listen to Too Short "Get in where you fit in."

What I don't like to do on Bascom is get pulled over on Bascom while chasing a raccoon.

Boy this class is a trip.

Ouija

By Jeremy Shields

Play the Ouija board if you dare
Wake the dead if you must
You might just be in for a scare

What's stuck in limbo if you care
Maybe their death was unjust
Play the Ouija board if you dare

Will the souls even hear?
Now I'm sacred and on the cusp
You might just be in for a scare

Hearing sounds, might be my mind
Shit just got real. Why did I play?
Play the Ouija board if you dare

Now where did everyone else go?
I'm by myself in this house
You might just be in for a scare

Hope my heart is still beating
Woke up from this crazy dreaming
Play the Ouija board if you dare
You might just be in for a scare

Have You Ever Been Hungry?

By Seth Salinas

Hunger. Have you ever been hungry? It hurts, like women giving birth it hurts.

Feed me, Seymore. It hurts, can you see more? Emptiness inside the mind body and soul.

It takes a mighty toll, can't see the sea no more. How to cure this I can't see anymore.

Pick scraps out of the garbage or floor. Never more, never more.

He was right ravens tap, tap, tapping at my door. Hungry to the core, hunger will not last forever, or will it? Until then I will drink water and be careful not to spill it.

One should never go hungry without sustenance because you're in jail, you'll never know what the fuck you're against.

What happened to you?

By Damaged

1. I attempted to go to college, but I gave up attending.
2. Showing up late did not help me.
3. Getting up early was difficult towards the end of the semester.
4. Losing my car made it difficult.
5. Making new friends at college was not easy.
6. Getting people to look past my disability takes time.
7. Maintaining good grades feels impossible, but it's not.
8. Having my dad lend me his car until I can buy my own.
9. Helps me fix my prior mistakes and allows me to move forward.
10. It is possible to obtain a bachelors in Computer Engineering.

Word Play

By Travis Naumann

I'm like a phone, a receiver. Oh, wait I had to hang up... I meant clever that's closer to home.

I know someone is bound to make a joke about the phone, so let's just dial in right now. 411 here's the information. I could do long distance or from a close destination listen to what's key. From the tone, on which I touch. Kind of has a ring to it wouldn't you say? I mean Hello? You picking up what I'm putting down, leaving you disconnected?

Hangry!

By Damian Rivas

Hangry! Hangry! Hangry!
Be glad that you aren't me!
You going to eat that G?
You forgot to share with me!
2 for 1 hunny bun? Anyone?
Wasn't hungry when I was spun!
Being hungry isn't fun!
Fuck it! I'll eat veggies. Can't remember last time I had plenty!
Hurts sleeping with your stomach empty. Is it breakfast yet?
Lost my food on that last bet!
Is it commissary yet?
No. Not Yet. Shit!

Freedom

By Navi

Here I am once again behind these walls. When I ever learn? I always say, "I am never coming back." But these streets keep leading me back behind these walls. I have done years, and, in a blink of an eye, time went by. This time, the months seem to stand still. Oh, when will I ever learn that this is not my life? I miss my freedom. Oh, how I can't wait to say goodbye to these walls and start my real life of love and happiness. That is the freedom that I miss.

I am Amazing

By Navi O

I am just crazy!
We crawled beneath the tent
I am just amazing

Lazy crazy day
We had to pay rent
I am just crazy!

Dizzy days Aazzy ways
We went to pay the rent
I am just amazing

I am only here for milestones
Thank you, good night,
I am just crazy!

Fresh up out the pen
This sucks, this sucks
I am just amazing

This doesn't suck
It really doesn't
I am just crazy
I am just amazing

If You Can
By Jonathan David Haney

If you can
Will you let us in?
That's only if you can

Turn that fan
When you get a chance
So, we can feel that fan

If you can
Help me understand
How to put it together if you can

Do what you can
So, we can understand
How a poem is written so we understand

How it works if you can
You change the way you can
Please I want to change who I am

Please I want to understand
How I came to learn just who I am
Please I love being me
And just who I am

The Devil
By Fantasma

Reminds me of when I'm out there trying to do good, but the devil appears in the form of a woman.

"Rafa, come here. Let's smoke a bowl, and have a good time at your secret smoking spot."

Puppets from B-Pod
By Fantasma

Puppets hang there docile and free, kill on command, and riot on the street.

Poor, poor puppet. Who's pulling your strings?

The Coliseum That Turned 3 Go!

By Mark Timothy Gann

Smiling, Pointing at the dollar seats
Your making a free spirit into exactly who or what you want them to
be
Blinking, anointing, when Too Short sings!!!

Laughing, bonking when Madonna sang!!!
Bore talking away merit is not a piece of me
Smiling, pointing at the dollar seats

Dining, coining when the circus blinks
Back door talking, Mafec Peinced it, for me too, for them come to
me
Blinking, anointing, when Too Short sings

EB-40 growing dreads like Jesus' seed
Making friends when Lucipiten bleeds!!!
Smiling, pointing at the dollar seats

Till when the mountains sing
The lions roar from sunset, till dawn
Blinking, anointing, when Too Short sings

After all the Doves fly when its time
A branch breaks if dried
Smiling pointing at the dollar seats
Blinking, anointing when Too Short sings

Coming into the Light



Image by Nick Strader

Absolute Power Corrupts Absolutely

By An Uncredited Author

Racing, repetitive questions about the legality of my incarceration—the years I spent killing and destroying for my country and a very special set of ideals and freedoms that this country was founded on—the constitution.

This country has shit all over that document of freedom and stripped us from the protections of tyranny.

Why did so many of my brothers die, and why did I kill so many?

Untitled

By Poetic Justice

Beginning to end
Looking into the eyes
Becoming mesmerized
Captivated by words
Like stars complimenting the night
Emotions of love
Flow through the heart like a flood
Mutual feelings we're pure
Like the white coat of a dove
Words from the heart
Penetrate deeper than darts
The tongue is a double-edged sword
Which may put an end to the start
Mixed emotions occur
They aren't what they once were
Is this what they call love?
I'm afraid I'm unsure
Denial kicks in
Trying to keep something not there
As the heart starts to break
It quietly weeps lonely tears

Untitled
By Poetic Justice

Lights projects truth
Like the sun emits rays
Without the presence of proof
What's the point to hear what some say?
Evil deeds are casted in shadows
Causing light to shift shade
Just when the river got smooth
Bright skies turned to gray

Untitled
By Mikio Espinoza

Real Eyes...
Realize...
Real Lies...

**To Prevent the Spread of Disease We Need Effective
Cleaning Methods to Sanitize Shared
Clippers and Razors**
By Author Unknown

I believe, this county Jail was opened up in the early nineties. Can you imagine all the people that have been incarcerated from that year to the present year 2019? There was a time that we were allowed to get regular razors, but due to the fact of razors being used as weapons, they switched to giving us shared electrical shavers.

This hasn't changed the fact that we are still in danger. Now there is another health and safety concern. We lack proper disinfectant sprays. We need proper sprays or solutions to kill the germs, infections, and disease that live in the very blood found on our shared razors.

According to researchers, Barbisol, which the jail provides to clean our the shared supply of clippers, has never been proved effective in killing many diseases found in jail.

About 2.2 million people in the U.S jails and prisons—one in three—have Hepatitis C, which is commonly spread through blood. If we don't have proper disinfectant, we can be part of the population of infected individuals that will continue to spread the infection. It only takes a few minor cuts and sharing the razor or clippers without proper sanitation to affect us all.

We ask that we do not become part of the statistics. Rather we want to be the remedy in helping preventing the danger we might unknowingly be to each other. Help us by teaching the Centers for Disease control's procedures to avoid the spread of all infections and providing us with germicide proven effective in killing diseases, such as Hep C.

Currently there is a lawsuit in Santa Clara County, citing unconstitutional conditions in its jails, conditions that may be similar to the one I'm describing.

According to public health information, "Since 2000 the state and federal prisons have been operating in full capacity and above." Overcrowded jails and prisons are optimum the breeding grounds for all infections doubling our numbers at a higher risk.

To learn more, seek out work by Jurgen R. Nowak, who wrote about HIV and incarceration. Additionally, more information about the public health implications of sustained correction on public health can be found at: <https://DOI.Org/10.2105/ASPH.055053> Journal of Public Health 95(10)

they feed us three times a day. These are meals that I cannot explain other than to say they are plain.

One morning this fall, they gave us one serving of grits or oatmeal, two scoops of sliced potatoes, 8oz of cold milk, and a jelly pack. For lunch they gave us two pieces of bread, two pieces of ham, two small cookies, and one small mayo pack and one orange or apple. The last meal of the day was one serving of beans, two scoops of steamed veggies, two pieces of bread corn, and sweet bread.

I know we're incarcerated, and there are people in this world that would kill for less. Yes, countless kids die for the lack of food in their lives. At the risk of sounding ungrateful, I still think San Benito Jail could do better.

Then suddenly one day, there was a change in the company who fed us and everything was better, much better. This shows, change can happen.

"In Psychology this belief is called self-efficiency. Even when the mission seems impossible, it is the strength of our beliefs that makes success possible. The absence of this belief guarantees failure."

--By Anonymous

Night Terrors

By McKay Lance

On a sad town where Garlic fills the air and my hair freezing wind blows two sleepless nights still the demon religiously fights to kill the angel inside for reasons unknown to a subconscious state of mind it still dies fragile politeness become casual impoliteness I wasn't raised like this, but my environment kept me from too much kindness spoiled tainted lectures seem like aimless teachings causing feeling and not because I came from a top notch something. I worked hard to become and now I'm a numb homeless bum banging drugs and anonymous sex in the gutless slums when I step back what have I done look who I've become a midnight scare and a sunless terror haunting my daunting future and the objects of my inner demons ruined my plans for a future so bright even from thoughts so innocent gone once a mirage now crammed by the blackest of a haunting night not breathing choked with thoughts now gone in a room of mirrors no end of this night hope no longer an insight or even a candle burning kind of bright now looking down a long dark lonely road terrors unknown and a promised bright road past just like blast from the past can't even remember no terrors being a man at last I will take on the terrors alone because my down fault the demons moved in to my home and terrorize my lonely road to call my own

Untitled

By Jesse

I hope I didn't lose my best friend cause I did not listen (actually two of them) Ghis shit dlady's Jimenez and Sage mother fuck'n knight Gladys girl you the baddest even when you the maddest.

I miss you and Sage for reals. I wish I would have listened.
I love you guys right now, y'all the ones I find myself missing. I wish I would have listened.

I'm sober and in jail. Fuck I wish I would have listened.
I'm a dirt bag with a fucked-up drug addiction. I wish I would have listened.

It's not always about you Jesse. I found out I'm the only one in my own piss'n competition, I wish I would have listened.

Now I'm locked up. Tables turned. I know why you're all mad. All you wanted was Jesse. Not dirt back Tucan to listen.

You probably don't want to hear it, but I hope you can find it in your big heart to listen.

I hope its not too late, but I need Gladys and Sage. My best friend to listen.

I want y'all to be there so this shit doesn't happen again. I want to stay sober so I won't be selfish, so I can be there next time you need Jesse to shut up and fucking listen.

Girl you taught me to shut up and listen. That's what best friends do. Next time I'll listen, don't be mad girl get glad. Young Tuck loves you I hope I didn't lose you and Sage cause I just would not listen. You can't shake me girl at least through this poem I might get lucky and you might just listen.

So, till the end my best friend, please just listen.

Change is Possible: The Proof

By Anonymous

About a year ago some inmates mis-used the electric clippers to light some paraphernalia, starting a small fire, which resulted in the loss of the clippers for all the pod for a period of time. Then some people tried to do the same thing with the TV, causing yet another fire. That was when San Benito County Jail invested in battery-operated clippers to avoid future problems.

This has meant for a time 124 inmates shared a total of four battery-operated clippers. Each clipper, fully charged, lasts only one hour before dying, which means only about three to four inmates a day can get a haircut. Additionally, the high use each clipper sees means they break after about 30-days, but they don't seem to be replaced as frequently as they break.

For example, 124 inmates are now having to share just one. How to even begin explaining how that's working out? It doesn't.

People are angry, if not livid, having to go to court and visit their loved ones looking like cave men. People maybe thought that the jail would fix the problem quickly. It didn't. We would ask the guards what was up, and they would either tell us they would ask their boss or just say, "I don't know." We even wrote up grievance forms countless times but got no answers.

Everyone started to lose hope or just stopped trying, believing that was how things were going to stay and I'm sure people with light sentence did not really bother with the problem, knowing they were going to be released soon anyway. So it did not really affect them.

The real impact was on people who were staying here for much longer. They could not believe it. It was unexplainable. Can you imagine looking like Chew-Baca when your loved ones came and see you? For them, they could not stand by and let this go.

As a group, we searched for options, found people who knew how things actually worked around the jail, joined with them, and made a decision to unite and speak as a group. If nothing happened with the first jail employee we requested to speak with, we approached someone with a higher rank until we got a sergeant who finally listened to everyone and helped us. It did not change everything for good, but we got the clippers and the plug for a good full day and were told the jail was going to work on the problem. Everyone cut their hair and shaved. Finally, we had gotten the ball rolling. It was a long and tiring battle but it was worth it.

Another example of the benefits of believing change is possible is captured in the following tale. In San Benito County jail

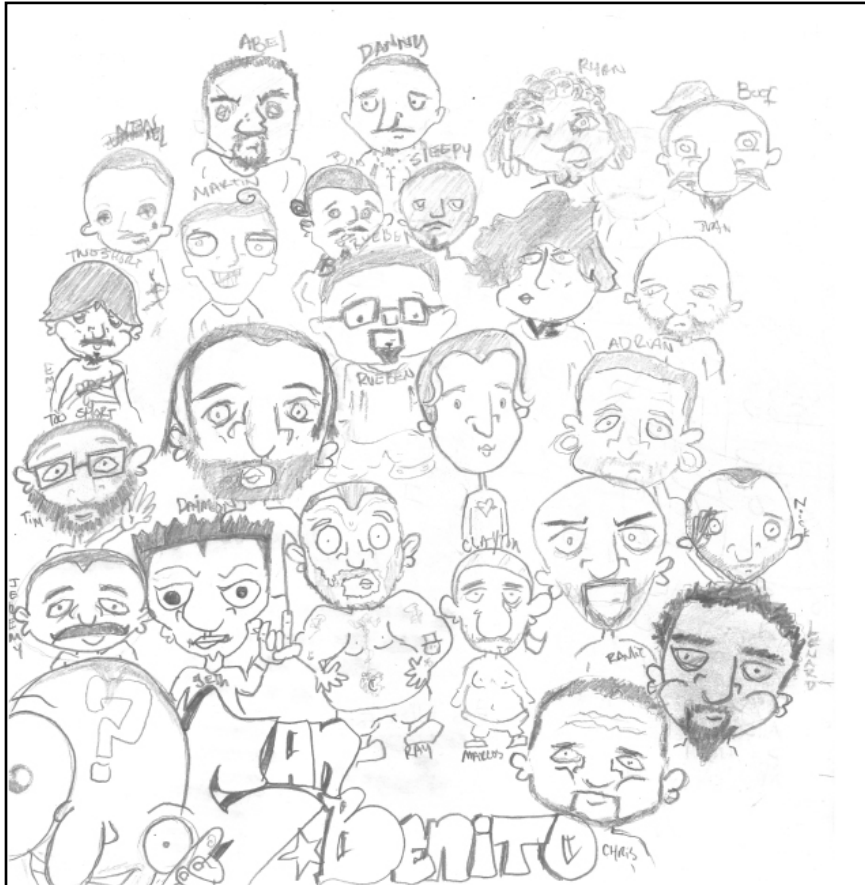
Notes on Change: A Preface

By Chrisco

How can we prove change is possible? Sometimes change is easy and sometimes change seems impossible. Sometimes change happens inconsistently, and sometimes it comes on the sly. Sometimes it takes collective action to change a policy.

Change can happen! Change is inevitable! But because it is inevitable doesn't mean a change is always going to be what we want.

To make a positive change at San Benito County Jail requires unity. This can be seen in the following examples. First we had guards bring the clippers and their plug all day due to a unified complaint made by the men of B-Pod. Secondly, we are now getting new food choices again. We don't know for sure why we got this, but we did get these things back after a week of being without, perhaps, because of group unity and our being educated.



Being Human

by McKay Lance

Being human seems to me being normal in society when you receive you give and when you give it should not be for any reason other than to lend a helping hand to a stranger or a friend. To help is to be there for another human to keep in mind, strength together can't be so easily unwinding but negative effect and thoughtless neglect will wind up doomed giving with no care but will feel a haunting lonesomeness like a lone wolf on a witness night chilled none the less a vacancy light left on being for attention from any individual just to fill that one more room and feel like purpose came home but its hopelessly cost a human being trying to fill a void inside an empty nest cold and gone no bird to sing the song of this humans strong and motivated life long purpose to belong slowly the drugs start flowing first by mouth and as sharp as a needle flowing with the blood of a cost human being so full of love now just strumming along to the hopeless life where they do not belong strong enough to play along and flow with pain never used to know but that's life as we know being human, I miss my flow when I used to glow to the world not just the homeless society's crumbiest people one might say they know maybe family? Not everyone is as fortunate you know maybe there is some fight but time as we know it can move so slow crying out won't help for we've cried for every bottom and I'll grow maybe some day being human as we know will give us the meaning to say screw this I'm in a never losing kind of mode I'll fight and bring love and light to this vacant home.

The Change

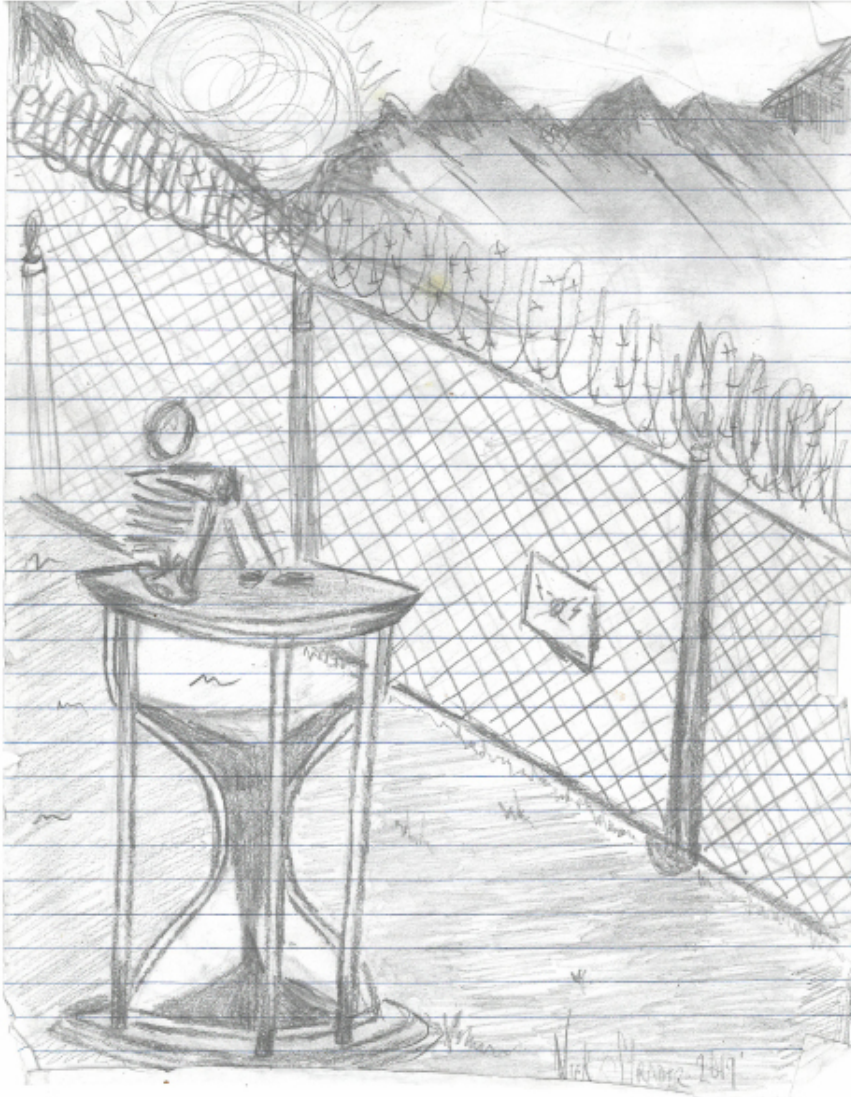


Image by Damian Rivas

Freewrite By C. Manzanilla

Going to be out in a week... I have to figure my new "program." Hopefully, I can go straight back to work with my last employer. I need to fix up my truck and try to save all the money I can so I can get a place of my own. I know I can do it; I've done it before. Plus, this time, I have stronger faith in my higher power. I just need to stay focused. The day I get out I want to do something in nature. Whether it be a trip to the beach or hike to Fremont's Peak. Camping would be also nice. Maybe at Hollister Hills, it's been so cold in the mornings though. My dog will be able to join me for these things so it's perfect. I miss him. He is basically my son. I take him everywhere. This is the longest I've been sober since I can even remember, probably since I was fifteen or sixteen as ridiculous as that sounds. I don't really have any friends that I want to see to be honest. They seemed to disappear on me since my incarceration. As my time here gets shorter my anxiety gets bigger. Starting over is exciting but right now it's very overwhelming.

Ancestral Tree

By Ron S.

To each of us must come concern. Young to old its rightful turn
Who am I that I might be? An exact copy from my ancestral tree!
So my features might appear the same! So, I carry the same family
name and that make me to blame. Would we be random roots and
different shoots, even if I never came!

Is it easier for a soul to see?

Who comes first in an ancestral tree? How about when it starts with
me?



Image by Damian Rivas

Untitled

By Poetic Justice

Through the darkness I fight
To prevent the snuff of the light
The warrior in me ready to ignite
To slay times of strife
The story of my life
I said it once I'll say it twice
If I said life is easy
That's surely a lie
The say it costs to be the boss
But is the price, really right?
Talking heed to hindsight
To exceed visions of insight
I hold into my dear life
Tighter than the grips of a vice
When times arise
Which fill my heart with spite
But like the sun I rise
Over mountains of turmoil
With a bird's eye view
To watch my problems unwind

Straight Up!
By Mathew James

Head toward the exit if you can
I was sitting next to him in the bus
Don't follow the coward if you can

Run through the alleys kicking cans
We looked like sitting ducks
Head toward the exit if you can

This isn't a test we are being jammed
Hey what's in your can?
Don't follow the coward if you can

Open the gates and let my wings spread God Bless
Receive the grace of God
Head toward the exit if you can

Surrendering is the first step to understanding
We tried to leave it, once the show began
Don't follow the coward if you can

Never do I give up or go backwards
Everyday I receive the grace of God
Head toward the exit if you can
Don't follow the coward if you can

It Must Change
Marcos Moraga

I see darkness is there a way to change?
I go to A.A meetings in jail feeling strange
Is it hope? I see sunshine no rain

My lifestyle is breaking me dealing with pain
My love—drug and alcohol—are my whores
Tired of the slamming steel doors

Locked up again wasting life away
To a T.H.O. different life, another me, I pray
I must change. Please help me God. I must change!

I must change. Please help me God. I must change!
Growing old feelings, dull and tired
Time to learn new ways without being wired

I don't want to smoke no more yale
I must be ready when I get out of jail
I must change. Please help me God. I must change!
I must change. Please help me God. I must change!