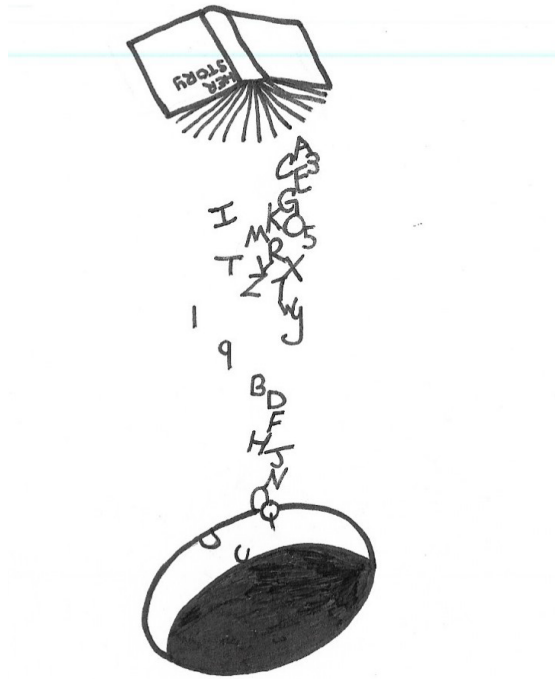


**Perfectly Designed for
Connections**



Artwork by Poetic Justice

Welcome to a collection of art and writing created by guests, staff, and volunteers at three different shelters across Denver, Colorado supporting women and trans folx experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of what you are about to read and see emerged from weekly writing groups, during which writers created, shared, and rang bells to celebrate each other's work; other pieces come from times of privacy and reflection. When you read this, writers and artists in these spaces are busy, right now, making more.

As an object full of feeling, this 'zine is grateful to Lighthouse Writers Workshop for giving these pieces a place to be held.

-- Alison Turner, Compiler

To see these pages in color and hear many authors read their work, please visit the electronic version under the "Writings" tab at writedenver.org.

Cover Art by Poetic Justice

**Three Pieces
by Mizzfitte**

Busy, busy, New York City. All that smoke whistling through the manholes, horns blaring and heels beating the corners as a bongo drum, all the while, I am just trying to cross the street. I hear the sound of the bells on bicycles, and the hollas of the street merchants trying to successfully sell their wares.

**Ring, ring, ring,
Jingle bell, ding, ding,
Ding.**

**Fall is over, now entering the winter season.
Red, green, and gold bells, ting, a ling, ding
Attached to a peace stick,
Bringing in a brand new holiday season.**

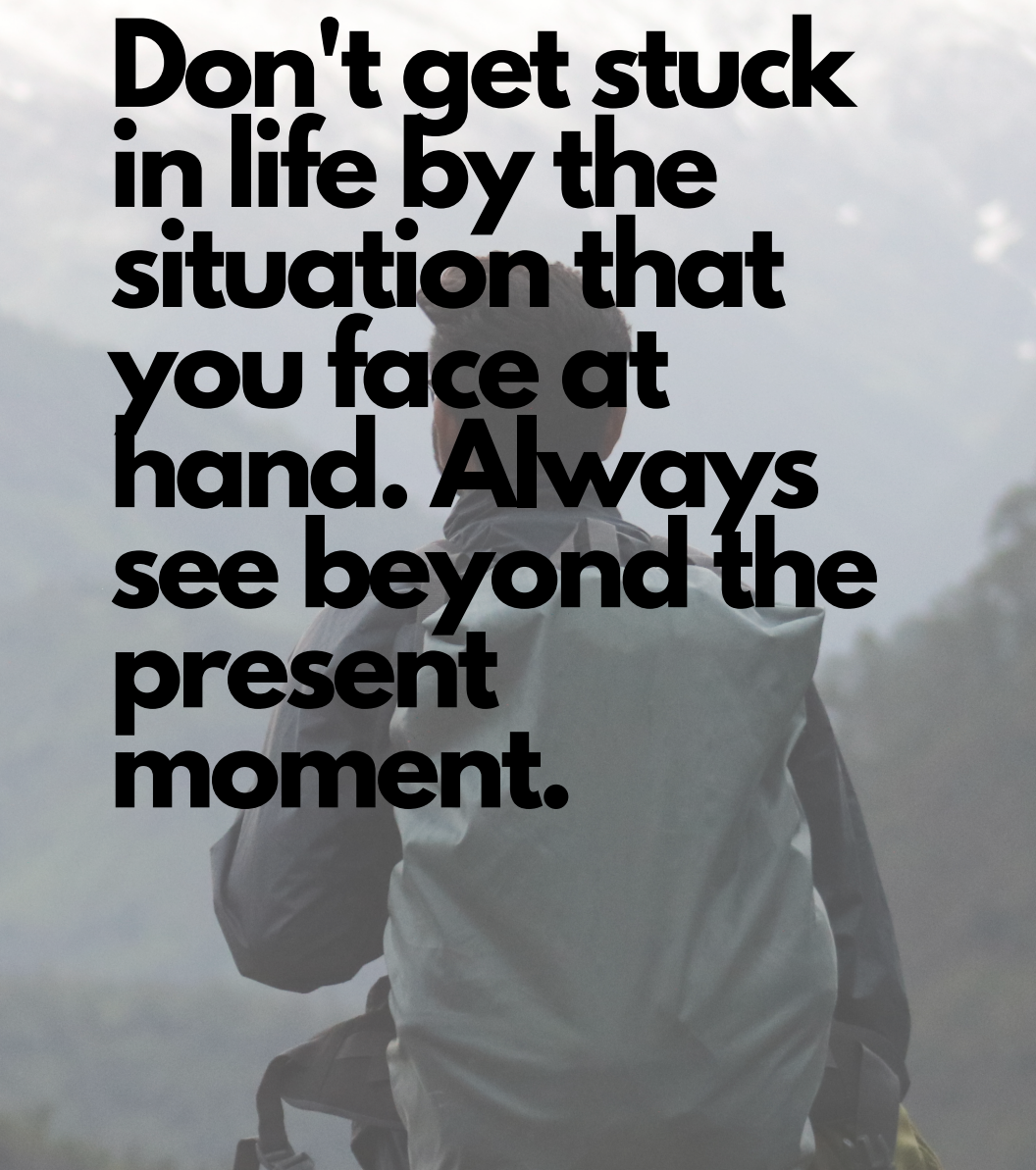
**Rattle, rattle,
Watching poor Jack Spratt going off and on, beginning to prattle.
Magic beans in a box,
All confined as with a lock
Shuck, shuck, shuck.
Much like a droplet
Rolling off the back of a duck.**

**Drip drip splat split
clatter
Cats, dogs, thunder clap
Splitter splatter
Clip-clop, drip-drop, H2O all stuck within a mane,
Trotting through the gapped cobblestoned sidewalks
Just enjoying the rain.**

Motivation

by Vony

**Don't get stuck
in life by the
situation that
you face at
hand. Always
see beyond the
present
moment.**

A person with a backpack is walking away on a path, seen from behind. The person is wearing a light-colored jacket and a backpack. The background is a misty, outdoor setting with trees and a path leading into the distance. The overall tone is motivational and serene.

Sandra and the Camel

by The Windtalker

She was running late when she found the camel on the rainbow.

Although it never rains in Arabia, the rainbow was made of green crystals, yellow crystals, and white red and pink crystals. Sandra not only wore red emeralds and gold lassos on her wrists. Sandra wanted to fall in love with an Arabian horse with long silky white hair and two black brains running down his back and also a red lasso to catch her with.

Sandra had been there ever since the Egyptians rode in on their wild white horses. Their manes were white as snow. One Egyptian stood out from all the rest.

A beautiful wild horse ran into Sandra and she became paralyzed with love. Sandra had never seen such an amazing sight. They began to day dream as they listened to the wind. The smell was an aroma of light vanilla. Sandra had eyes of silver with small dots of gold.

She approached the Arabian horse as he galloped up to look into her eyes. She stopped and thought, "Are the rubies on my mane shiny enough?" She glanced into her mirror as her mane of silky gold touched her eyes. A tear came to her eye when she realized her soul mate was staring at her. The Arabian horse decided to go to the flower garden in the deep blue sand. He thought to himself, "What music scent would my beautiful Sandra like?" He walked into the middle of the flowerbed and found the most beautiful stargazer lily. The aroma melted his heart. He looked behind him and out of the sky came two golden butterflies. They danced to the lilies' heart beat. He picked the flower so gently that the two butterflies danced with the lily.

Sandra looked up and saw the Arabian horse galloping towards her. He handed her the dancing lily and she began to cry. He took her hand and started to dance. He began to weep as they went into the mystic fog as they galloped to the Egyptian pyramids. They heard a woman's soft voice speak through the wind. She cried for her mate King Tut, but who would have known that her mate was King Tut. The Queen? She has long beautiful hair with braids adorned with white diamonds and red garnets. And she holds two canes with gold cobras along her legs.

She had two roman soldiers that haunted the pyramids. She cried for King Tut, knowing he was going to die. She cried for green lilies to adorn her beautiful toes. She adorned her calves with white golden cobras wrapped around. Their love stays strong as wild love does.



**DON'T
BUMBLE,
BE
HUMBLE.
-QWEEN.**



"Cicada" by KC

"Hands" by Izra

Our hands were so
Perfectly D E S I G N E D
For connections

Fingers----- long to wipe tears
Tuck hair behind a lovers ears

Palms LARGE to balance and support the heads of babies

Precisely spaced
To contour to the grooves
Of another hand
In our own

Now,
I'm realizing
My hands are desperately aching
To shake an ashy, sunburnt, hard working hand
To kiss thick calluses
To fist bump a new friend at the bus stop
To lotion the cracked, aching, stinging hands of essential
employees

When all is said and done
My hands
Will never take
Touch--for granted again.



"Quarantine" by KC

Life's Experiences

By Anonymous

I recently went to The Gathering Place and saw the list of people that have passed away this year, in the streets. My heart went out to them. What was their last meal. Did they eat. What was their favorite food. What were their family lives, how about their relationships. What were their favorite hobbies, their lies, their dislikes. Their favorite activities. Did they have pets. What were their dreams. What were they longing for in life. What were the circumstances of their demise. What was their faith. Did they believe.

Knowing When Not to Do Something

By Lindsey Howard, Catholic Charities Homeless Shelter

Ingredients:

Follow intuition

Know your surroundings

Trust yourself or someone accountable

Let yourself go through good and bad experiences so you know the difference

Directions: In order to know when not to do something, you have to follow your intuition. Next, you have to know your surroundings so you cannot get lost. Third, in every situation you have to trust yourself or be able to trust someone accountable. Last, let yourself go through good and bad experiences so you know the difference. That is how you can be good at knowing when not to do something.

Photo: "Setting Your Sights on the Horizon and Aiming to Succeed" by Qween



"Flourish" by KC

"Different 2020s and Beyond"

by Izra

And so, they woke up earlier
To catch the too crowded bus
Because it's running half as often
Full of other overworked essential employees

With their makeshift PPE
Worn for so long they leave reminders
Of their servitude
To those wealthy enough to work from home

And they washed their hands
Their skin now papery thin
Cracking and stinging
But wash them again

And they sanitized
Between every customer
Cleaners making their home in their lungs
Burning
But sanitizing again

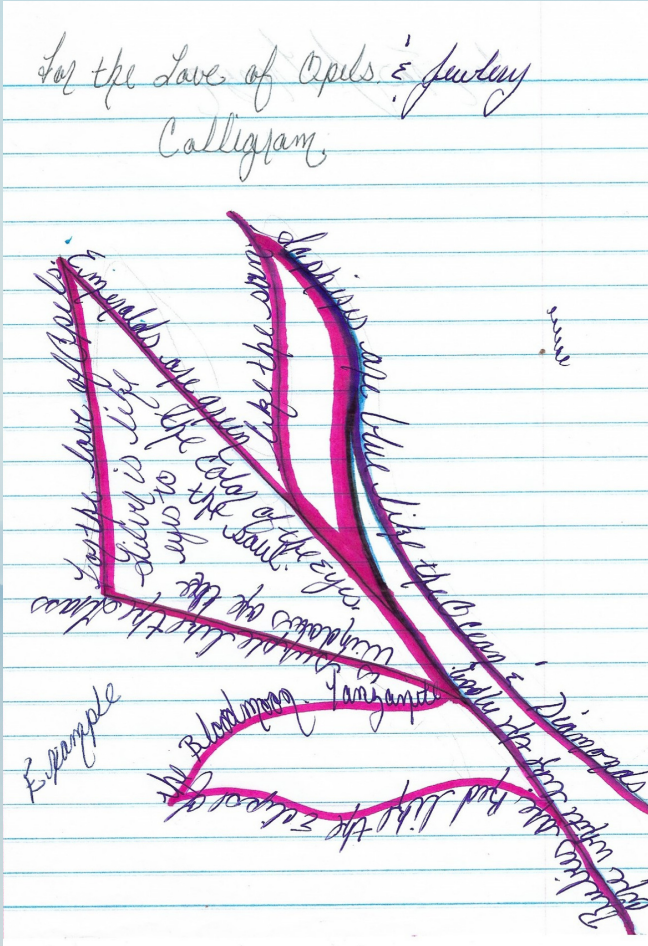
To cook for you
To clean for you
To remove your waste

You,
Who holler from your windows
At the safety of 8oclock alone
For your heroes

The heroes
Who try to buy groceries on the poverty line
To find only empty aisles

These days I don't feel so essential
Let me clock out
Let me stay home
Let me be safe too

What the
 women deserve
 It should be
 respect care
 and love
 Not only for
 the moment
 but all the time
 I want to do it
 and practice
 It is because
 my mother was
 the one
 Who played a
 great role
 To change and
 improve my
 life.



Calligram by The Windtalker

--Bekele
 W Woldeyesus

Untitled
by Poetic Justice

As interesting as you are
I would not have figured out
You could harm
Much less create such damage
Your edges curve perfectly
Rugged yet beautiful entanglement
The depths of your curves
Moves as ocean waves with short story -ending
Your colors sway to watercolor paintings
You make it difficult to join you
Trying to grab at your bark
But my fingers crinch with pain
As you disapprove my climb
My feet urge to dig into your spaces
But you fight back with the smoothness of your touch
I just wanted to see
I yelled but softly in my mind
I want to be tall
But you shock with disappointing -approvement
Your laughter I feel across my face
As I fail to embark upon you
You start to chant your victory
The flowers lift to the air moving to your sound
The grass bow to your mystery
I stand silent with frustrated anger
You saw my failure
Your leaf came down



"Mouse ran out the clock" by KC

[Untitled]

By Lindsey Howard, Catholic Charities Homeless Shelter

Red is the color of the petals in a rose given to me on a special day.

Orange is the color of a pumpkin that makes me think of the smell of pumpkin pie baking in the oven.

Yellow is the color of the sun high in the sky on a hot summer day.

Green is the color of my eyes in little chunks in little sections.

Indigo is the color of the dark water in the middle of the ocean.

Violet is the color of the flower petals in the sections of a flower, usually next to white or yellow.

Behind the Mask I Wear

By Qween

What is this mask and why is it here

What is it made of and why do I?

Why WOULD I wear...a mask 😬

Is it the foundation, the Matt, or even the base that produces the SHIELD that hides my face

Is it the Mascara & eyeliner or inch-long lashes that could cause a hurricane with one flutter?...that makes my vision a black haze

Is it a curtain to cover that window to my soul

How do I know ✕

Is it the Rouge on my cheeks or the ruby red-glossed lips ✕ that pierce as they beckon your kiss 😬

Or just to grimace ✕

Who could tell behind this mask I wear who wants to know or even cares

they say the mask's for OUR protection?

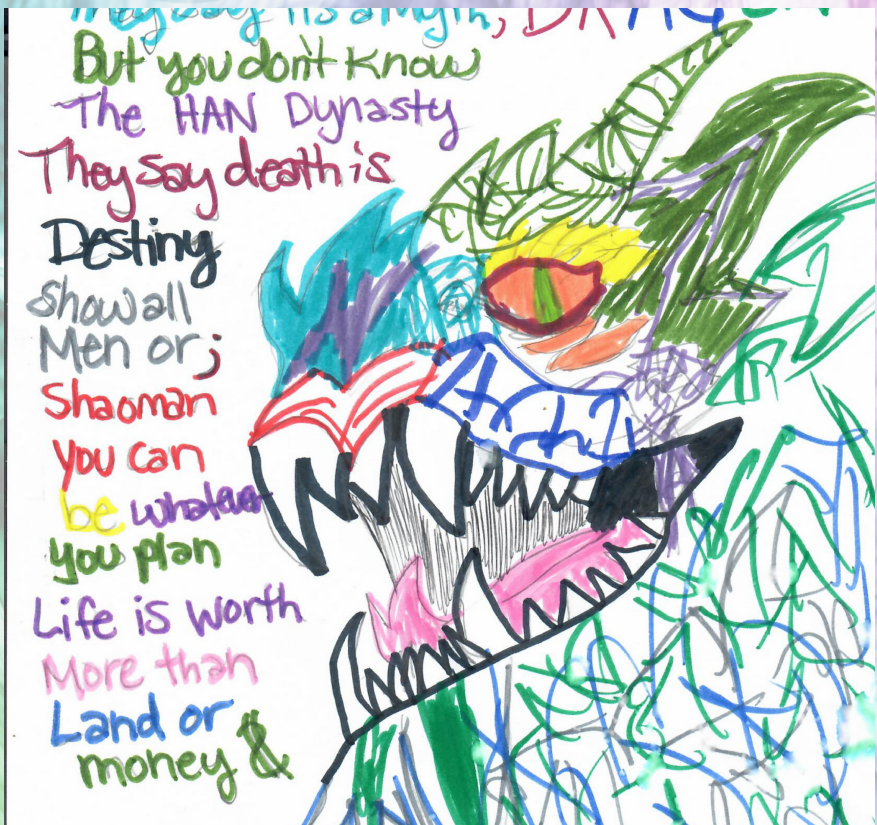
But what will protect me from this distorted communication and lack of affection.

Who cares that I cry

but I'll lie and say it's just steam in my eye...from this mask.

Who cares that when I inhale I smell death ✕ no matter how many times I brush...is it my breath ☠ behind this mask?

Now the question is...do I dare to ask? ...What is going on behind your mask 😬



How On My Encounter of Leases Each Shelter Stay (H.O.M.E.L.E.S.S.) has shaped my life

Telegram: Kaydee Morgan

From: Your reflection/deflection within the growth of process/progress

Drip, Drop, Drip! Falling from the sky, I need TLC for
Glaucoma in my eye!

As I leave the eye clinic, moments later
I see a form of alligator shew in the clouds
He looked almost like a fire breathing dragon;
And I heard a loud sound, BRAHH!

He flies through the sky as it rains till nigh

I'm surely not mistaken, I see a real

Life dragon in the sky---

And I wonder if this ladder is worth staying on,

'Cuz my corporate life has shattered!

A tornado came and dusted everything which was
Once in my life. Being homeless trying to hide from

light. Glory and Joy I see in future's sight,

Bringing me great delight!

Now I'm running from every fight,

Never taking no for an answer

When it's facts that I gather.

Traveling the town with my buggy full,

Looking for a shower or an hour in some shade

7 yrs I been without housing;

This life I grew into was not of my choosing!

I have to cut my hair as strength begins to fade

Water isn't free, why must we work for such a
commodity!

To turn around and buy the necessary to survive

I will not lose my liberty, so I remember my
integrity.

Homeless isn't who I am; I strive to find my
necessary needs

All the way until the day is complete.

No matter who I meet I must be careful,

Nothing in this world is more unbearable!

P.T.S.D.
By Anonymous

Sometimes P.T.S.D. can sound like an atomic bomb exploding in my face.

It's the sound of trees breaking out of the ground.

It can sound like master sergeant bulldozing out of his mouth, all of this is my fault, even when it isn't.

Then it can become eerily quiet, with heavy breathing, trying to collect himself, or trying to find more stuff to tornado more obscenities at me.

I can feel it, too.

Like in the old cartoons showing a bomb going off and everything is pushed and hurled at me.



"Stripes" by KC

Somebody Greater Than Me and You

I am a Majestic
view

I am an escape
a shelter

I am a refuge

I am shade

I am a song

I am a Majestic
view

I am standing
tall

Reaching the
sky

He is majestic
too

He is greater
than me and

you!

CLOSED AREA
No Camping
No Pets
No Alcohol

By Qween

Vivid Imagination

by Vony

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be in a relationship with yourself from someone else's perspective?

I sit here in bed, and as I open my eyes from my daily prayer and meditation, I'm realizing that my bed is empty. There's no morning kisses, bright smiles, nor do I hear "good morning, sunshine, glad you're awake. Here's breakfast."

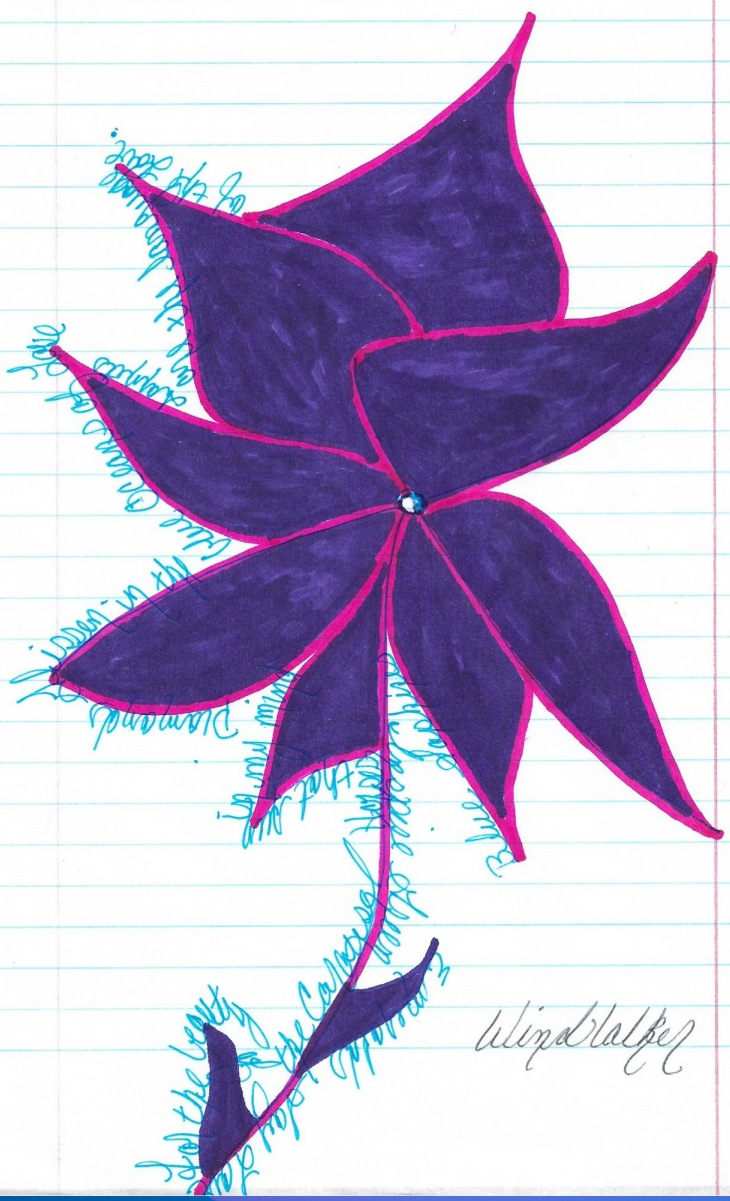
I picture an image of a well-groomed, tall, gym-body man, smiling at me with a breakfast tray in his hand.

I snap out of my vision and get back to reality. As I sit up, I ask myself, How much do you love yourself, Shavonne? Are you giving yourself the love that you seek? Are you cherishing yourself as you want someone else to cherish you? Are you consuming healthy things? Like watching certain shows? What content are you looking at on social media? Are you exercising regularly, eating a balanced meal? My answer was "not really."

The Dress of a Lifetime

by Windtalker

As I twisted, my beautiful lace gown shone blue and violet while the lace around my breasts shone indigo with beautiful petals of yellow. The green lace warped around my toes to enhance the orange diamonds that glowed through strings on my wrists.



Windtalker



Artwork by Poetic Justice

“A conversation that I Have Heard”

By Lindsey Howard, Catholic Charities Homeless Shelter

A conversation that I have heard is my schizophrenia, and I mention that because there are many conversations that take place in my head. The most recent is when I am about to go to sleep. There is a voice in my head that is proactive in attempting to prevent me to sleep. It will say I want you to be uncomfortable, or I thought you thought you were gonna lie down and go to sleep but you're not. Then it says I'm trying to get her to get up and smoke but it translates to me to just get up and smoke. There is a nuisance of many other examples that is conversations in my head.

My Journey

By Anonymous

If I could change anything in the homeless community, I would strive to get people off of the streets. No one deserves to be homeless.

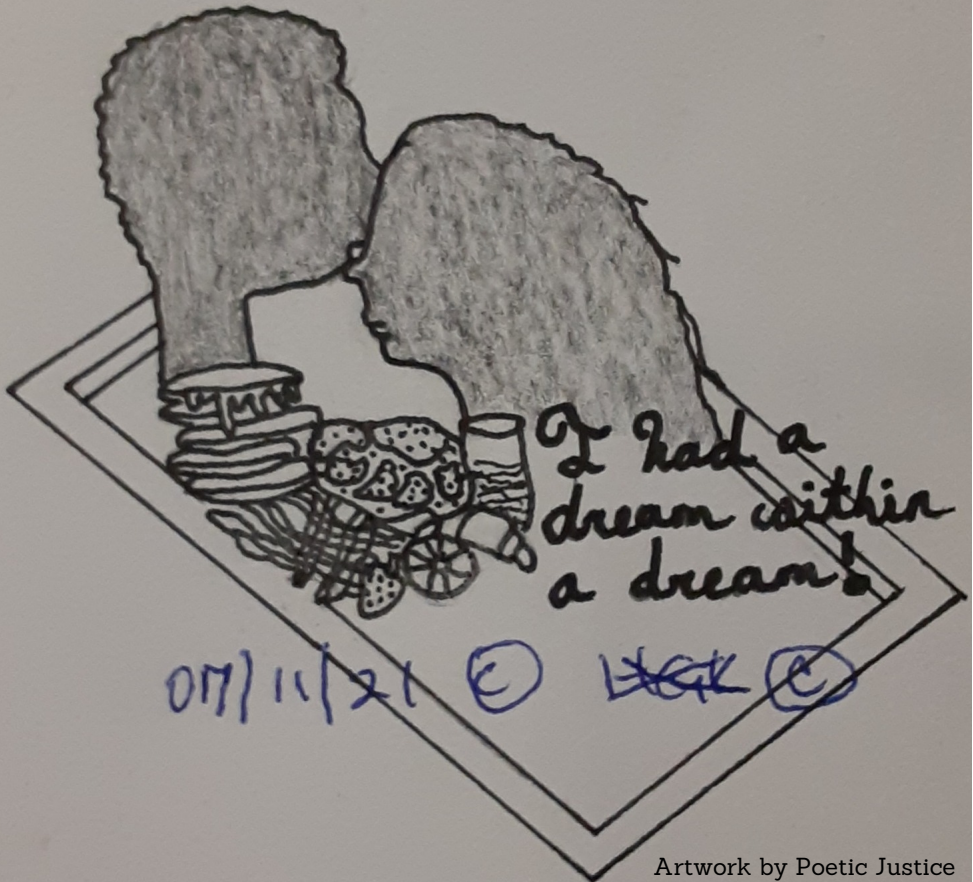
Have you ever been homeless? Can you relate to the situation? Have you ever experienced this type of living situation? Trying to cope. Trying to keep your mindset positive, not negative. Because this is only temporary, not permanent. We all come from different backgrounds. We can learn through our hardships and our experiences.

One time when I was homeless, I did not know where my next meal was coming from, or would I have a place to sleep. All of a sudden, I heard a voice saying that you can come and live with me, and she took me into her home. Because I was distraught, feeling very isolated and lonely. Thinking at the time that no one cared about me.

I have strength, I have patience. I have endurance. I have hope. Hope will get you through because you know that because it is only temporary, you can adapt. I have faith. Because faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. So you know that things are going to change. So you have to keep persevering, keep going and you become stronger through the process. Trying to keep a good mindset helped me to grow emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually.

Do you have faith?

Change is good because you can feel yourself becoming you again.



Artwork by Poetic Justice

Been A Long Time

by Kaydee Morgan

I wake from a slumber. Something popped inside me, as I heard searing flames; crackling in the wind. These flames grew larger. Times would change and I would have a new main name. Nobody knew what I had heard, I was a jailed bird spying like a cyber nerd. Cyber cypher with numerous words to describe my nerves. Nothing could change my mood except valley fair brand cheese curds.

I'm watching from inside the window and realize the fire is being started by my antique wooden trunk. I start to remember all the poems and memories I wrote about that used to be stored in that particular trunk.

My mind begins flooding with different poem topics I endured, as my eyes start stinging with tears so salty.

I am going through a huge mental breakdown! Realizing all my books are being burnt to crisp at this point, there is nothing I can do to stop this from happening.

I scream out the window at the perpetrator. I am furious and need to be reassured that I am seeing something that may not be real. I was not being fooled by my eyes, she told me straight up, there was a bunch of stuff in the attic that they had to burn. I got so mad as I felt my stomach ball into a knot. I packed all my belongings, and began the process of moving out. I

had writer's block for 3 years after that. I am currently getting back into writing and typing short stories. Reflecting back now, this is a new exercise that I need to get used to because I have PTSD. Things will never be the same from the mental subduing I felt. I can't help but remember the pain and scarring of what was ripped from my life. I miss reading my poetry while going through different emotions in the pieces and topics I wrote about.



Declutter Your Closet

By Vony

There's this girl I met a decade and a half ago. She was a beautiful woman with a Coca-Cola bottle-shape. When she walked by every guy, no matter their status, they would look at her. She stood out in a crowd. She caused jealousy and insecurity issues in other women.

One would never in a million years have thought that she was fighting demons on all levels. She hated herself and wanted to kill herself. So she walked around wearing a fake facade. Such a pretty costume in a filthy closet.

To whom it may concern,

Hey, it's Penny G. Hope all is well with all. K. So I've been living in this H.J. hotel that the city of Denver made into a women's and transgender facility. K. So I started a job, I LOVE IT. U know, those of u that know me know I LOVE laughing + encouraging women + people in general. So the PERFECT j.o.b. And talking sh*t and taking money, LOL.

Anywho. We have lost a couple of good women and mothers, daughters, etc. So tragedy has occurred around me. However, I have to keep pushing along. Talking to Carol, she's cool, encouraging women to get it together (she can't do it all by herself). If u want the HELP, go to the source. A lot of people with a lot of different issues + situations: 1 name is not gonna stand out to them. So reach out ladies, everywhere, if u need H.E.L.P. don't be afraid 2 ask.

'Til next time, Penny G.



"Bearded Ballerinas" by KC

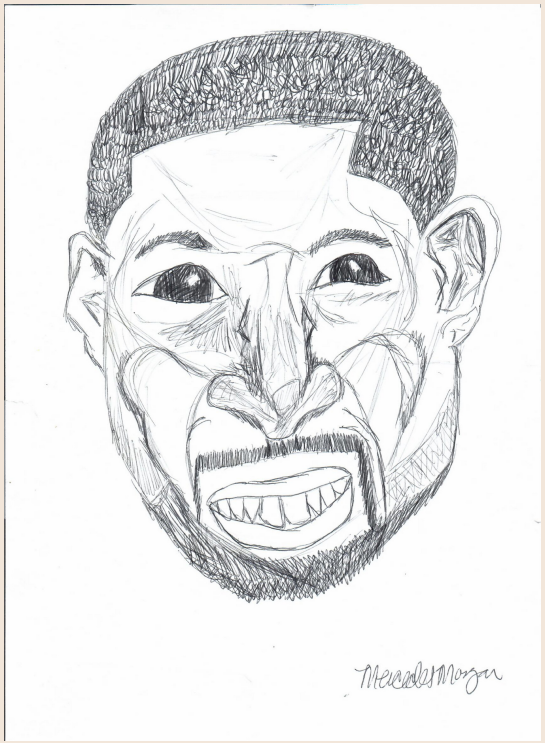
**"SUNNY DAYS WOULDN'T
BE SO SPECIAL IF IT WASN'T
FOR THE RAIN,
JOY WOULDN'T FEEL SO
GOOD IF IT WASN'T FOR
THE PAIN."**

**"I'M THE DIAMOND IN THE
DIRT THAT AIN'T BEEN
FOUND,
I'M THE UNDERGROUND
KING AND I AIN'T BEEN
CROWNED."**

--50 CENT

**50 CENT INSPIRED MY
WRITING IN THE 'ZINE AND
PART OF HIS SONG "MANY
MEN" HAS BEEN AN
UPLIFTING PIECE OF MY
LIFE. SO I DREW HIS
PORTRAIT!**

-- KAYDEE MORGAN



Untitled by Anonymous

Good morning!

by Love n Light (Angel)

Romans 13:10: Love does no wrong to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

Romans 13:10: I want to go where everyone knows my name-

We all remember the show "Cheers" and the hit song that laid out the story line, and had us all thinking, "man I wanna be there too."

One of the song's lines is


"You wanna go where people know,
people are all the same,
You wanna go where everybody knows
your name."

"WHERE PEOPLE ARE ALL THE SAME"

I think of a world where everybody greets with a name and knows we are all here in a place "passing through," a place where we know we could all rely on one another, where everybody says, "brother/sister." No color or background is even a thought, and you are not seen by what you wear or how you look but only that you and I are created by One God!

We could all see His "will be done on earth as it is in Heaven" (Matt 6:10)

Let us do no wrong to our neighbor!

Let's start with a greeting 

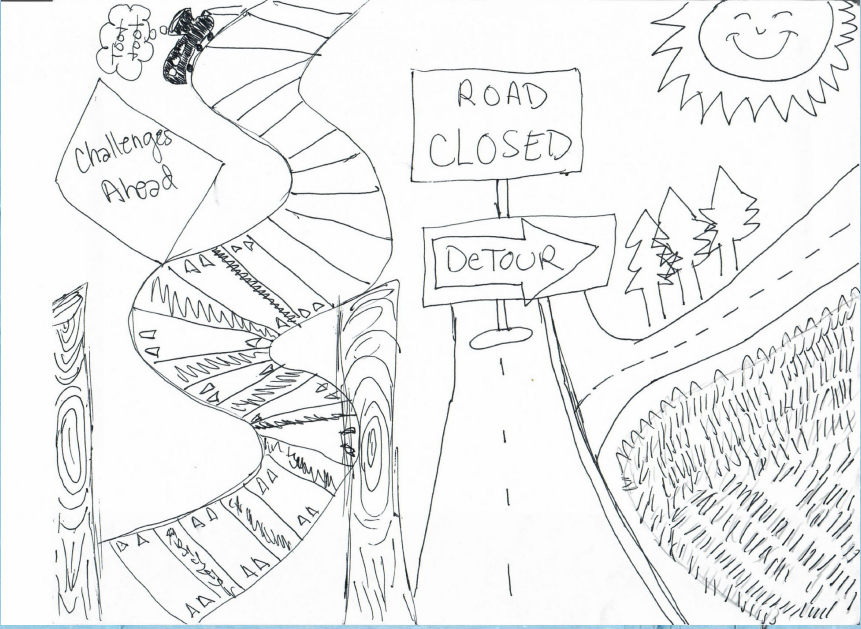
Mark 12:31 The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

There is no commandment greater than these."

#thankheavenfor711



God bless you all! Love n light



"Detour" by Kaydee Morgan

"When Roadblocks Come" by Kaydee Morgan

When roadblocks come
There's things all around me;
Many avenues I can travel.
Time and money, without a
lateral route.
My head is spinning, and as I
lose balance:
My very essence is of
importance
Life is a continuous battle, and
I'm coming full throttle.
As the view becomes more
clear
I realize I'm not the only one
here

I am not alone,
Even when I have to be strong.
Lessons, I pass loving the roller
coaster I'm on,
A thing called life
Living to be a blessing, within a
star
Coming to help where you are!
Through this, a jungle called life
We all see periods of pain and
strife.
I feel the pain of my heart sliced
by a knife
Nothing has healed right!
So I grab my pen and pad,
And try not to be so mad.



**Summer Solstice
by Windtalker**

**One day I awoke to the
falling of cool
raindrops on my wrist.
As I looked to the sky,
there was the most
beautiful sun I have
ever seen. The colors
shone on the sun
bloodred as the sun
melted into the clouds,
dripping streams of
red and yellow.
The day grew hotter as
the sun began to melt.**

Meet (some of) the Contributors

Alison Turner

Alison grew up in the mountains of Colorado, where she learned to endure large amounts of time in inclement weather waiting for buses.

Bekele W Woldeyesus

I live and reside in the State of Colorado. I was born in the capital city of Ethiopia in 1958 G.C. When my mother and father divorced, I was forced to discontinue school from third grade at the age of 11. My mother took me to the other part of the country and suffered a lot to pay the school fees and all other expenses. I went to one of the Catholic schools then the governmental comprehensive high school, which I completed in 1979 G.C. I went to private colleges, too.

I taught in elementary school for some time and then joined a governmental insurance company and have worked for about 15 years. I have worked for various companies and organizations here in the USA. I am married and have got six grown up children.

I am very glad to mention the greatest contribution of my late mother in this short biography .

Izra

Izra is a twenty something queer trying to write things that make people feel seen.

Kaydee Morgan



Integrity is a big part of my personality, and I like to be involved. My morals are consistent with my actions. I am motivated to write a book one day, and by sharing my many experiences I may be able to touch many lives. Writing is a habit I got into as an outlet for me which I began in 5th grade at the age of 12. I am a student in art and design, so I also enjoy drawing and painting.

(continued on next page)

I am Kaydee Morgan and I'm happy I got a chance to contribute some art to the zine we have created as a community of thoughtful women. I'm also excited to receive a copy and be broadcasted online. We all come from different walks of life which will show a beautiful artistic combination. Thanks to others for submitting your work so this could be possible.

Lindsey Howard

My name is Lindsey Rose. I was born and raised in Denver, CO, starting in 1991. I have not really done much writing in this form. I am grateful to have an opportunity to publish my work. I plan on continuing my writing.

Love n Light (Angel)

I started my journey of writing devotionals every day to grow in my love for scriptures. It took me on a journey to understand His Gift to us and the talents we are given to share. I was an addict for 32 years and set free. Now He Gives me His spirit to help to write and love the full life He has given me.

Mizzfitte

I am a NYC native with interests a mile long. I started writing at 9, built the beginning of a manuscript at 24, and connected with TGP for the start of my writing career.

Poetic Justice

AKA Habel Gabriel Kinta Harney

Founder of Carib Harney Inc.

Citizen of North America and Commonwealth of Dominica

My inspiration for the moment is a company I want to start from the ground up that as of right now includes my foundation for my children's charity and other interests in the field of video gaming, book writing of all sorts! I am a freelance writer with inspired thoughts from my deceased grandfather! You would have to pardon my artwork in drawing as it is self taught and still in the process of maturing! So far my artwork has been chosen by small start up companies and I am hoping for a chance with the big boys and girls!

(continued on next page)

My children's charity is in process as I have had disturbances from the area I reside in and the people within! I hope that my charity hits the world by storm as to also fall upon your doorsteps! I have hope, you would understand, to realise the concept of a 9-5 freelance artist in pursuing this idea I have congregated in my mind! So bear with me as my bio is short and my life is private to your thoughts! I hope to share with you the experience in the near future!

Sincerely,

HGKH

Qween

Hi! I am more than just a mother of four, a grandmother of 11+ more. I like to cook, bake, and garden, and I also love photography, music, and the arts. I discovered writing and poetry about the age of 10 or 11 and my love has only grown since this writer's class has sparked something in me that has been waiting so long to come out. So here's a little taste of the inner me. I hope you enjoy it.

Vony

Hi, I'm Shavonne McKinney. I'm a designer. I was born in Nassau, The Bahamas, and later moved to the United States, where I currently reside. Five years ago I discovered the power of affirmations and how to use them.

My designs are about helping people incorporate saying daily affirmations in their daily routine. Saying an affirmation a day brings more joy and makes life feel a bit better. Have a dose of daily affirmations per day along with your daily vitamins. Try it today! View my work at https://linktr.ee/daily_affirmations_tees

The Windtalker (Tamara)

My name is Tamara but I would rather be called The Windtalker. My son Loren is my everything. Nameless I am but not for long, I am strong in my Indian heritage. I love life and I strive to be the best I can be. I dream to teach dolphins to sing.