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“There is no greater agony than bearing  
an untold story inside you.”

– **Maya Angelou**

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# Foreword

by DD Armstrong

As I write this foreword, I sit here asking myself how best to sum up the importance of the National Literacy Trust work with the New Chapters Project. I want to open with something profound that symbolises the notion of starting a new chapter or turning a new page. To offer the reader a quaint anecdote that illustrates the perilous mental journey people in prison must take to find and share their voices. The vulnerability they must accept, the trust and confidence they must build during workshops to bring their work to life; along with the painstaking and mammoth task the NLT team take to organise each event and get creatives like me through the prison gates to work with people in prison.

As I ponder this conundrum my thoughts wander off to this strange place which nestles at the back of my mind. I've always known this place. In fact, over so many years it has become a station of comfort and sanctuary for my weary thoughts. At the best of times, it is the birthplace of ideas and concept and at the worst, a prison for my vexation. It is a house of mirrors that reflects my deepest thoughts and darkest fears yet challenges me for betterment.

For most of my life it is here between the hallowing winds of numbness and boredom that oddly enough for 'write' (right) or wrong I have found my refuge. It is here in a safe place called

creativity that I first found, hope, which led to my voice, which shone the first light of desistance.

As a young man in my early twenties, I found myself in the segregation block of Wandsworth Prison. Lying on my bed (I say bed, at the time it was a mattress on a raised slab of concrete no more than six inches off the floor), sunken in the basement of the jail I watched the shadows at surface level, disturb the natural light which crept into my cell as they walked past the small bars and wired glass that proclaimed itself a window. It was here, in this cold and dimly lit dungeon (which had been confining men since the 19th century), that I started my writing career.

A career that has seen me become a published author, win awards, a scholarship, a Masters' degree, teach people in prison on two different continents, to work for one the world's major broadcasters and ironically visit Buckingham to meet the late Queen and now reigning King.

But it began there when I heard a voice shout, "Oi DD! DD! Come to the window!"

It belonged to my childhood friend Joey. As 4-year-olds we had attended the same primary school until he got kicked out. As pre-teens we had attended the same playcentres and adventure playgrounds until he got banned. As a teenager he was one of the first of the 'youngsters' to go to jail. Now here we both were as young men in the block in the same prison. It was a comfort to hear his voice.

"Yo, Joe!" I yelled back "Wha gwan?"

"Tell me nah!" he shot back a reply. "They bring your property down yet?"

"Nahhhh blud, I'm going crazy in here," I whined.

Two days with no entertainment or stimulation can do that to you fast.

"Alright, say no more," Joe called from the depth of his cell.

I could tell he was laughing. It's a strange thing to say, but it's kind of like when you can hear someone's smiling over the phone. There's something in the tone.

"I'ma talk to screw and send you some magazines and that!"

"Bless, my brudda!"

I heard Joey calling to the block screw on duty. Moments later there were footsteps then the heavy metal flap on his cell door opened.

"Yes Guv," I heard Joey start the conversation. Whoever he was speaking to spoke in a low voice akin to Charlie Brown's school teacher. They were formal and matter of fact. I pressed my ear against the cold steel of door to better hear what was being said.

"Yeah, but Guv you could just give it to him now?"

The officer muttered something inaudible. I wasn't sure but it sounded like some protocol. To which Joey replied, "Ahh cmon, Guv, you're being harsh. Why the long ting? You can just run it to him now. I beg, he's my little bredrin."

The officer said something more, Joey replied, and the footsteps were heading to me. In a second the flap on my door burst open and a pair of haggard dark eyes peered at me.

"Armstrong," The eyes scanned the cell then frowned at me from beneath thin brown brows. "If you want to borrow a magazine, you can put in a request at mealtime. If your request is accepted,

then we will pass the magazine on at the next meal.”

It was my turn to frown. The next meal was supper, which meant even if I did get to make a request, I couldn't get the magazine until breakfast the next day.

I'd like to tell you I cussed those eyes out.

In the time he took to come and say all that to me he could have passed me Joey's magazine, but no. The eyes stood there waiting for my reaction. A reaction I refused to give. I nod my head, gave him a thumbs up. Then went back to my bed. I sat down with my back against the wall. Jaw and fist clenched, I tried to compose myself. Rocking back and forth, I slapped my back against the wall, knowing not what to do. I had a frenzy of energy. A cocktail of raw emotion, ready to set fire to a village. Yet I was powerless.

So, I did the only thing I could to ease the pain. I began writing a pseudo-rap/poem built on sheer angst. An ode to all the BS in my life and no matter how hard I tried how, every choice I had made had led to reside in that cell/hell.

The first line began ...

'All roads lead to nowhere/ when you have no fear and don't care.'

For the rest of that cool summer evening, in the solitude of my cell, I memorised line after line, experimenting with wordplay and metaphors until I was happy. I went to sleep reciting the lyrics in my head and when I woke, I was excited to find more. Something had been awoken in me. Something had been freed. By the time my property bag came all I wanted to do was write out my lyrics. Over weeks lyrics become letters, letters became stories, stories become books.

However, this may have been the first time in my life where I had found the therapeutic powers of writing. A place where catharsis meets creativity. A place where one finds their voice. A place where one dares to dream.

There are many people in prison nationwide who could probably tell you an identical story, although each one of us has our own unique experience. There are hundreds searching for hope, thousands for ways to overcome their pain, to express their trauma, to ask for forgiveness, or to find redemption.

What the National Literacy Trust does in the New Chapter Anthologies is give these people in prison the power to be heard. To see a chapter of their life in print. To be brave and learn new ways to express themselves. To have their unheard voices on a page. To be reborn between the spine and the cover.

So, take time over the forthcoming pages because each piece represents someone's salvation. A statement for a new opportunity or life they are weighing up.

**DD Armstrong**



# Introduction

by Melisa Muhanguzi

New Chapters is one of the few projects at the National Literacy Trust that is aimed at both young people and adults in secure settings. It harnesses the power of creative writing to do three things: improve wellbeing, raise confidence and make people feel their voice is heard. It encourages those who are isolated from the outside world to tap into the one thing that is your choice, and that nobody can take away from you – creativity. Through poetry, storytelling, lyric writing and beyond, we aim to inspire our participants to start writing, and keep writing, reminding them that this can be their superpower if they learn to be unafraid of the pen and where it can take them.

With a little help from our guests, co-hosts and authors, we facilitate events several times a year in each of our funded settings. The authors will often have lived or have relatable experience of the system, helping to create a safe space for emotion, authenticity, and innovation. Our events welcome seasoned writers, first time tryers and everyone in between. The choice to attend lies with them, and they are never obligated to share their work. No matter what their previous experience of creative writing, it is important for us to shine a light in areas where confinement and marginalisation is high, and voices are often silenced.

The order of this anthology is geographical – each chapter represents every setting New Chapters runs in. Please be aware that the content in this anthology may not be for all readers – there are sensitive themes and explicit language used throughout. All submissions have also been anonymised in line with safeguarding protocol.

It's been an amazing journey since taking over this project, and I am beyond honoured to be a part of New Chapters and this anthology. Now, all that's left is for you to grab a cuppa, get comfortable and enjoy the ride.

Happy reading,

**Melisa Muhanguzi**  
**Senior Project Manager, New Chapters**



## My Trees Roots

I come from the countryside if you would believe it, wish I could redo my youth so I don't regret it.

I come from a family the pigs never trusted, swear they had a vendetta we were always getting busted.

I came from a Scotman, that was always drunk on summit man.

I come from a family where the "criminal life" is just accepted, but the "proper half" just think we're rejected.

I come from a family that's truly forgiving, sometimes it feels like they control my living.

I come from a family that never stayed around, I was always moving onto the next town.

I came from a Scottish clown, he's left all his kids with a frozen frown.

**Jamielee**

# The Criminal Student

(a prequel to “The Prisoner”)

“I been in this game for years!! It made me an animal...”

Chris was singing along to Biggie Smalls on the Money Route to school. Just starting 6th form two months ago, Chris had figured out a way to make £200 before his first lesson at 8:45am. The “Money Route” was a well known road on the edge of Central London, almost an interchange if you will; with an underground station and a train station opposite each other on different sides of the roads. All types of activity and commuters used the “Money Route” on a daily basis. The foot traffic averages a quarter of a million people a day. In the busy-ness, Chris did not observe the scenery with enough scrutiny to notice the police operation set up. After Chris’s first hand to hand sale of £70 for 3 £30 rocks, he was followed. The second customer had made an extra £50 while waiting 20 minutes for Chris, and asked for a deal of 2 for £50, with the promise of paying £10 later on in the day. That time would not come. As Chris pulled out 2 more rocks for the extra £50, a plain clothes police officer places a hand on his shoulder – “you’re nicked!”

**Fabian**



BRX

## Untitled

In the concrete jungle where no green is to be seen,  
 To find own peace of quiet, Eden is hard.  
 But just jump on a train, and in no time it seems like  
 Eden is flashing by.  
 Bit of garden, empty wasteland with the odd fox, the glimpse  
 of a park, and soon in the open countryside, though it's not your  
 own Eden.  
 Each fleeting glance through the window is your own.  
 When the tide's out, oh to walk down by the water's edge,  
 It's so calming, even in the rain.  
 Bits of sand here and there, odd bit of wood, rope and plastic  
 from somewhere else anywhere but here.

In the night, in my dreams, I can  
 travel anywhere I want. Dream of the  
 beach open hills, green grass, freshly mown.  
 Crunchy autumn leaves under foot and orange  
 sunsets over the water on a summer's night.  
 I just remember being in  
 the middle of nowhere, on a road of 5 miles  
 to a place in Somerset with a turning off to anywhere else, no  
 phone  
 signal, and finding a box of cigs by the road.  
 And just feeling happy again.

**Matthew**

## Untitled

The bell at night goes on so much,  
 so loud, right in your thoughts. On and on.  
 Why press it, no one's going to get it.  
 They're having a coffee or just eating.  
 Up the dale, down the pit, life's right grim  
 all dark, no sun and lots of rain and slime  
 Up the dale, down the pit. There's no wage  
 down the pit. Just a penny a day.  
 Bread's got mould, cheese is all hard,  
 not even mice want to eat the crumbs.  
 My mam says I'd be daff like a brush  
 all 'cause I like to lick road with tongue  
 as it tastes like ice cream.  
 The path tastes like cake  
 and grass like sausages.  
 so I'm not daff,  
 just a bit thin.

Just hopping along  
 lost keys, shot stops,  
 cotton balls, rabbit ears.  
 I can't remember as I remember  
 of the lost winds

Down on the LPU.  
 Though we're on the 3rd and 4th floor,  
 If you have no canteen,

you'll feel quite down.

They will say try to practise some mindfulness,  
that it may make you a bit better, but the  
same problems are always there.

Narrow streets with overhanging windows,  
with the building leaning that cast dark shadows,  
Hidden souls inhabit the shadows crying  
mournfully in the night that wake the  
people who live nearby.

**Matthew**

## Untitled

What a divine predomination exalted my soul  
with passionate content,  
seeking bit solace for my current chaotic mind.  
You were young and I was young, wayfarers in terra Incognito.  
Surreal feeling that love was real and we grow old  
like a short dream our yearning desires so unfulfilled.  
How can I live without thee, painful forlorn?  
Twenty-five years of glory with some ups and down  
your magnificent eyes, complement the ethereal feature.  
Alas, I hear your tenderly voice in empty cell wall,  
so restless, so aghast,  
I wish I could turn back the wheels of time back to the future.  
The past is nostalgia.  
The present is torture,  
and the future certain corporeal demise,  
in the sanctity of union. Our soul will survive swiftly  
in the post demise.  
A voice from out the future cries  
"On, On! but o'er the past.  
Mute, motionless, aghast!"  
Sadly, my paradise was lost!  
Beneath debris of agitated memories and mind.

**Mo**



## Untitled

All along the road, there were tufts of grass and brambles stretching across the road. It was clear that it had been unused for some time.

As I stumbled along, I had to chop and hack my way through more weeds,

I could see in the distance a roof of a building, but it took another three hours

of chopping to get to a shop front (well, by the way it looked), like a village post office-shop-store.

After climbing in a window around the back, there was a small kitchen area,

then the shop area. At last I could stock up. A few hours later, I lay on my sleeping bag, looking at a local map, nibbling bits of chocolate.

There were a few big hills and then about 5 miles to the coast.

If it was like the road I had taken to get here, that would take about a week.

I would see if I could find some sort of trolley to put stuff in.

In the morning I had a look in the outbuildings. All there was, was a ride-on mower, which is the best thing of all and had two full spare tanks. I could now plan a better route to the coast.

**Matthew**

## Untitled

Away along the windy path on a high cliff, with the rain whipping at the exposed face of the lone walker as he struggled against the wind. For he knew that, one wrong step and it would be all over. Finally, he made it to the top and saw a small hut down in the cove. It still took him a good hour to get down to the cove. As he opened the door of the hut he could see some boxes had been left for him. A chair, table, bookcase, bed, stove and an old butlers sink. A bucket, some tools, an axe and a little chopper. He opened the bag he had with him and took out some pre-made bread and ham sandwiches and sat by the door, looking across the cove to have a think about - why he had chosen to stay here on this island, for who knows how long? But he could have food dropped off every month and a few more books.

**Matthew**

## Rain

O' The mighty cosmic order of divine Interject life to all  
 sentients, the flora fauna  
 The source of wealth, drought and famine  
 The source of prosperity and health  
 Send on the behest of Zephyrus, Hestia in fact God the divine.  
 A Rain bird herald forecast your motif; peaceful drizzle and  
 heavy downpours Your arrival changes the landscape, panorama  
 Transform the arid desert into the verdant fertile into  
 tropical savanna.

Ripe our fruits, in the orchards.  
 Wheat, Corn and a Barley in the farms.  
 You cause migration in the wildlife, the birds, the bees,  
 the butterflies Enjoy the heaven of ample food.  
 A sublime symbol of purity and bless  
 I wish you stay with us in harmonious mood.  
 Let melodious birds and more avian sing madrigal  
 such as the Skylark, Sparrow, Starling, Raven, Robin & Rook  
 share the happiness for all.

Gratefully you give us Ponds, Streams, the gushing Rivers,  
 Lakes and deep Oceans.  
 Aquatic species, uncharted woodland of Amazon's valley.  
 Coming down from ominous dark clouds with glory and pageant  
 I could hear your coherent melodies sometime so  
 pleasant pianissimo  
 Followed with sudden robustious rage fuelled

Sturmabteilung fortissimo.  
 Creating fear with thunderbolt flash lightning.  
 The floods, torrential rain create deluge.

Causing an utter havoc all run for shelter of their safety,  
 I've a secret; once saw the majestic rainbow  
 at the posthumous-rainfall of clear sky! The unexpected calming  
 scene of mind,  
 Like naked Sadhu sedentary in the cave  
 Behold the dusk and dawn in meditation and contemplation.  
 a gift of nature, assuage my innate mental chaos.  
 This I construe the inseparable bond, the love & hate rules  
 applies, we're remain at the mercy of the nature,  
 we cannot live without you, with your precious crystal drops  
 Not only we quench our thirst with your body  
 A vital need for perpetual existence.

I'm always longing to meet you

O' the colourless and tasteless H<sub>2</sub>O

We could not deal with immense downpour, your monsoon I  
 witnessed your wrath and indignation  
 Destroy the cities under your path, everyone faced annihilation  
 Sometime mercilessly as hailstone or tender as snowflakes  
 Your absence causes tremendous stress  
 The quest to meet you digging laboriously wells  
 And further more we come out to the open field in state  
 of agony.

Singing, passionate choral hymn, dithyramb, paean, encomia  
 To please performing ritual dance, beating the drums,  
 making sacrifice in order to appease.  
 beseeching words of incantation invoking tearfully  
 your invitation.

Who need umbrella for blessed rain?  
 Who need Deucalion or Noah's Ark to rescue earth from  
 apocalyptic inundation?  
 A good presage to drown in the river Phlegethon in Hades.

Mo

## An essay on my voyage around my cell.

Before touching the core mystery of the title, I prefer to elaborate few lines on the matter of human innate nature: Free Will.

Not all actions need to be within our control. Perhaps, someone might be a genuine kleptomaniac, gripped by a compulsive desire to steal – a desire that takes away their freedom not to steal and literally compels them to take things. If this is possible then their stealing could perfectly well still be genuine action of theirs – something they deliberately did. But lacking the freedom not to steal, their action could not be something for which they were responsible. If the notion for moral responsibility is freedom. Action is our responsibility only insofar as it really is free – something really within our control to perform or not.

The long history of the free will problem shows up in its name. Freedom and will are words that we in every day life do not ordinarily much use when talking about our control over, the up-to-us-ness of our own action. Nevertheless, for the last 2000 years or more Western Philosophers have used precisely these terms to discuss this problem of whether we really do have control over how we act. Their choice of words 'freedom' and 'will' tell us something about why it might matter where we do have action control - and what this control over how we act might involve.

... If what you do really is within your control, then you can decide to be free to act otherwise than as you are doing. You're, as philosophers put it, a *free agent*.

Why are we not free?

Casual determinism is the claim that everything that happens including our own actions has already been causally determined to occur. Everything that happens results from earlier causes - because that determined their effects by ensuring that these effects must occur, leaving no chance for things to happen otherwise. So, if casual determinism is true, then at any time what will happen in the future is already entirely fixed and determined by the past.

Everything else we did intentionally could only count as such derivatively, through being intended effects of such acts of the will. These initial decisions, acts of will, have to be non-physical. They cannot be an event of the brain, for example the voluntary actions to which they led might occur physically - as which our legs move as we walk to the bank. But the initial acts of will that gave rise, to those voluntary actions had to be entirely spiritual, and immaterial... So, we see that brain contains vastly complex neural networks conveying a plethora of electric charges or signals, changes in the distribution of which appear to be correlated with thought and mentality. We are inclined, therefore, to think that, like any other mental capacity, our decision-making capacity must somewhere be embodied in the brain. Thomas Pink, *Free Will* (2014).

The question then is how to explain behaviour that signifies people are willingly choosing the wrong action. Socrates' belief that virtue is knowledge means that as soon as this knowledge is possessed, the person willingly follows the virtue. He also insists that all men wish to be happy and not miserable. As a result, he believes that nobody will voluntarily pursue those actions specifically vicious actions which will leave to unhappy life. Michael Moore, *classical philosophy*, (2018).

*A Voyage around my cell.*

*One can be boarded until boredom becomes the most sublime of all emotions\*\**

I've occupied one for the very first time, since 2005, with tariff of IPP, five.

With great disdain, I don't deny the detestation of losing my liberty. I recalled, and confess to my mental breakdown right from the start, the sullen experience on the short journey from the magistrate court to single Cell - of Wormwoods Scrub I've been to hell in and out more than twenty times, my heart was pounding faster, swifter and heavier thinking of the unthinkable. At dotage the unexpected accident to imagine, how I've acted upon my impulse, faced destroy. It was gory domestic torment, cause alienation from the loved one. And now reaping the dividend of that avaricious deed.

At my senescence, my weary mind, confused and exhausted. On the moment of arrival, I was supplied with a plastic plate, cutlery, a cup, a bar of soap with shower gel and a tooth brush and toothpaste. Standing in the queue for rationing food, like a beggar, the first time was added more to my inner feelings and humiliation. yes, like someone fallen from grace, with great ignominy and disgrace. Gradually, the initial resentment mitigated, but the discomfort is still there.

*Like many others in prison, I become more vulnerable: there was, and still is, more, a culture of drugs and bullying and suicides rate go higher on the volatile ground. It not arcane in fact to analyse even life is not worth-living, it creates the right atmosphere with ambient opportunity for self-condemnation leading to despair bitterness and suicide! Bearing in mind, the eerie silence and solitude are the main ingredient a recipe of imminent disaster in Cell!*

Recalled the first night; endured; the angst, worriers, fears,

loneliness, sorrow, despair, lugubriousness and myriad contrite.

bereft so deep  
In little dungeon,  
I could not eat,  
I could not sleep.

Came with Insomnia, crippled with bout of grotesque  
nightmares and dreams

Clairvoyance, necromancer and prosopopoeia with the soul of  
hanged, prisoners the erstwhile residents in this sinister Victorian  
cell. And I wonder,

Was that a preordainment of some divine phenomena? In fact, a  
realism of human endeavour!

landed now in the Bergen-Belsen Brixton, the "LPU" the London  
Pathway Unit a corrective labour camps, so it's known, the Gulag  
of the UK.

This ugly hunted concrete box, the transmogrification-  
Bibliotheca, was merely my planned intention. It was a matter of  
survival under the harsh living condition.

A thousand miles away from human civilisation.

Doing therapeutic work consider yourself as Guinea pig  
in the lab. You have to create a new vernacular, new lingua  
franca working with members of staff and the prison-based  
clinicians. In this utopian world, one is not allowed to have any  
emotional attachment with any members of staff and clinicians,  
regardless their empathy and altruism. A paradox to live in the  
wider colonies of another human civilisation. The boundaries  
should not be pushed to the so-called extreme per se (calling  
someone friend, displaying affectionate emotion and expressing  
XX in communications are construed something taboo, innocently

I've used

them disregard and use my instinct by writing to Dr Andrea,  
an absent clinician, as a result endured 60 minutes lachrymal  
scrutiny of sadistic anguish).

My 1.1 therapeutic session is terminated surreptitiously under  
erroneous prognosis, that I might have Casanova's syndrome.  
But no point crying over spilt milk. The so-called self righteous  
elements policing vice under virtue and morality code which is  
not credible, neither practicable. So, fickleness on its nature, it  
might seem. The hypothetical scenario to assess how human brain  
functions, it is rather complicated and labyrinthine subject. I've  
no prowess in the field of neurology, I've noticed by doing Therapy  
the hypothetical scenario was the four functioning neuron  
Lobes from the brain (phrenology chart) are to be removed and  
download the human skull with high tech AI, to supersede the  
innate characteristic of each individual with the use of a remote-  
control a cutting age creation of a mechanical humanoid cog.  
How authentic are these thoughts that might sound in order  
to penetrate deep into the psyche and the ethos of human  
beings? I leave the logical and scientific analysis to the reader's  
own judgements. There is a quest for a more unanswered question  
in this field.

Though my physical existence under strict incarceration

*My thoughts, are free. I cannot stop thinking, my thoughts are me\**

I'm not dead yet, no one should lament my annihilation. Indeed, I  
was a protagonist of the heinous, tragic vile scenario

*mea gory culpa, time long past.*

\*\*

I found friends; in state of solitude; a collection of my books my

little art gallery of pastiche

Each one speaks on different themes, sometime attending symposiums the source of formidable wisdom, various topics, under discussion, one talks about art

another Poetry, History and Theology; the Torah, the Bible and the Quran, adhere with some contemplation of spirituality. taking keen interest with those

who discuss discourses about philosophy and mythology. I'm glad, they all share this crowded cell with me.

I'm a garrulous interlocutor by nature, not often so, analyse theories of logical argument Conjectures and refutation. Our debates always take place nocturnally,

The scientific hypothesis of intellectuals of all epochs; Thales, Socrates, Sophocles, Seneca, Sartre and many more

Turning pages of inanimate books into animated metamorphose I speak with these philosopher dramatist and writers of the past. Checking all inferences from file to file, chapter to chapter.

Listen to evidence refute or disrepute on an Audio, Video Radio some visual footage on the TV screen. A collection of lectures, and classical music On CDs and DVDs.

\*\*

Some subjects are funny, making me laugh, some are so tragic that they make me weep

I prefer those who give me encouragement, forbearance & peace, mental tranquility and more vital advice on how to survive. These are a moment, my mind is oblivious in cell confine, these are occasions that I engage by reading, making a cup of coffee

or a tea.

My little chamber, is a universe, the order of cosmos, a macrocosm also, a microcosm or vice versa.

Decorated cell wall, a gallery, the "Scream" the "Guernica", "the Kiss:", the "Rape of Europa<sup>4</sup>.", the "School of Athens", "the Swing<sup>6</sup>", Kahlo

and further embellished walls with yet more images, drawings such as; the dancing trees

plethora pictures of artists work of the past eras. A various sad eulogy and romantic poetry, few aphorisms glue to the Cell wall up and down. The ballet dancers, I like the Swan Lake.

Placed fresh flower under the table Lamp cut from prison garden, the fruition of my labour.

But I'm being bored with incessant ghastly inertia, long stagnation, no fear of death, immortal soul in my possession.

I've left dear congenial cronies in the civilised world outside,

Lives under the same roof with some notorious, nefarious elements inside

The corrupt system rule upon the nation. Work with slow piece with clinicians as a patient

With great Andrea, a peerless clinician, ethereal young pedagogue Colombian, her departure caused enormous distress.

Forlornly child in me begging her vainly, not to forsake me!!

Part II

Grendon Cell

I've spent two futile, fiery summers ended, with deselection, due to immense frustration, mental health, and other uncertainties. The haunted site, was initially designated for mental patients

Turned into DTC (democratic therapeutic community) consent obtained by- system under duress-covertly and overtly a breach the code of ethics, bizarrely a pursuit of blackmail a tactic well conceals and disguise under the cover of pretense as voluntary candidate.

Majority cohorts of professionals working in the prison system are used as a cog that give motion to the whole system. The case of symbiosis and synergy, the magnitude of harm.

they cause under the title; re-education is deceiving. It is hard task to convince the detractor side of society. Historically psychology was used as tool by the Nazi and the Soviet Union and other tyrannical regimes bringing dissident to prison in order to re-educate them.

Million humans vanished, annihilated, starve to death at the concentration camp and equally at the Gulag labour camp. Paradoxically, the democratic egalitarian governments of the West rigorously utilises the psychology, and psychiatry serving the inmates under the NHS.

Reside at B-wing, Cell with wide window, to joined another thirty-nine erring.

That could mark as the defining phase of my melancholic life. I was reluctant, doomed with four years post tariff at that point fully withdrawal from therapeutic work. Remained reticent, not contributing matters related to touch my emotions.

On the cell door, glued Goethe's words of wisdom

*"I prefer liberty more than anything else "*

in contrast with Cell at Brixton after two years,

a little cartoon displayed at the Cell door; holding the placard read, *"I'm campaigning for free speech but too scared to say it"*

On the backside of small cartoon an aphoristic remake read *"let go of anger and upset - they will only hold you back"*.

*Attributed to my characteristic imbedded in the DNA.*

On the Cell wall a Latin phrase written; NASCIO QUID EST MATERIA CUM ME (I don't know what is the matter with me). Question mark is to evoke interference to the undiagnosed PD, personality disorder. Unfamiliar with complex world of therapy my conscious mind.

Breaking the inherent boundaries, stiff upper-lips. And stoic values pushed my life at dire peril. Colossal crisis exerts. That was motto of therapy. Tangled with a group of nine, like a pack of hostile wolves, each one wanted a slice of my life! Ponder, the safety, when one is swimming in the murky water of the sea you either submerge in water or attacked by ferocious selachian fish.

Digging deep each narrative delivered, no mercy, with impunity. My Cell became my shelter, my refuge. My world immures, the silence, my personal security,

The three days group work pluses two community exposed me to trauma, talk about confidential issues in front of strangers, I felt the shame and the ignominies.

Every group meeting was painful experience I sensed, like sitting under the Sword of Damocles. Faced with dilemma; "you be damned to do it, you be damned not to do it"

My mental health deteriorated immensely prevalent were,

suicidal thoughts Took me on nocturnal journey to a stargazing, the universe- darkness.

Fall in love with empty darkness of the infinite space, sometime cloud causes unwanted obscureness' and wind also disturbed the paramour rendezvous with darkness of the abyss, drooped the eyes and passion. Cell window was rather panoptic to witness

The old dilapidated incinerator was vivid sign sending of ominous feeling. Stargazing at nights became routine. On my cordless head set listening to Callas's soothingly singing the heart-rending operatic song; vissi d'arte, vssi d'amore from Tosca. And the Ascending Skylark. Albinoni's adagio was gateway to a suicidal thought took me on the journey further to the dystopian dark world waiting for liaison with a celestial medium. Standing haplessly liking my self-inflicted wounds metaphorically.

I've not wrote my own obituary yet, but wrote a suicide note. Emilia's office, her surgery was my shrine my asylum my only habitue. A propitious friend to confide on. Gracious Emilia, as shelter stood between me and the Angle of Death, lovely was her intention, to succor life

as ephemerally, repose for now?

I visualise this could be my last abode. I hope not. The consternation, IPP would not liberate me, life in despair the harbinger of poignancy and dolor!

### Zoophile

In Cell of **Brix** ton reading all night to extreme fatigue hit my mental state, slumber takes place unconstrained.

...;) The night begets both me & the day,

I'm content at least to wake up, and continue with my

prolong agony.

Eager to take a daily stroll of Brixton gaol's exercise yard. Away from precariousness of Cell monotonousness dwelling and inertia into the precious time of an hour out of cell is like obligated pilgrimage I should not miss, disregard inclement tempestuous weather. I ponder the time of absence from my Cell a small step toward liberty. In fact, palatable to experience fauna, flora, watch the red Squirrel, the Cat and the Rats prowling around I want to see the thieving Magpie. The Crows, Starlings, Woodpigeons, dove. And beautiful Robins, dear majestic birds. Going down to little Garden, armed with nuts, fruits and more foodstuff in replete.

Out of the five benches in the yard, I take a seat at the close vicinity of their dining field

So, honoured to attend the concert of these unique artists of the infinite sky, each one performs a sky dance. What a unique repertoire. A visit to the Hippodrome.

Serenading the right notes of symphony orchestra, some cappella with dexterity,

After brief exaltation and rapture. Walk in the garden, sense the fresh air, watch the sky, the cloud, the wind, the birds, and contemplating with my thoughts. This is a time I prefer my own accompany. There was a rainbow I behold once on the sky, something was there celestially an enigmatic phenomenon of the abyss and beyond on that day.

At the concluding part of a short hour break I sense been frogmarched back to the old familiar Cell. The old Dante's line speaks to me haplessly.

*"abandon all your hopes, you who enter' Haplessly enter my cell and*



*spurn myself even more.*

All I need a peace of mind. long lasting peace, pax vobiscum.

The whole experience, voyage around my Cell was matter of survival in fact, the memories are all dark, It's eerier atmosphere, a way from human civilisation, Into the savage hub.

Away from loved one, family and friends, On perpetual exile, behind the tall razor-wire wall! Not a sojourner, it took so long, Socrates died in prison Cell like the fallen queen Hecuba.

Numerous prominent thinkers and people of vision vanished in cell.

In our life, thing is in perpetual state of change people and animals more general grow old and die so are plants wither and Rocks erode. Nothing it seems is unaffected by state of flux. Life is solid elastic resilient with loss and longing.

\*\*

**Fatal Cell of the land elsewhere, still haunt me in my nightmares!**

In winter of 1979 I've tested the first fleeting experience of life in Cell. The size was not more than 1.1 meter, no window, concrete floor with corrugated roof in the middle of knee deep snow, On the death row a treasonous offend, involved in a fail putsch to overthrow the government. For over a month coerced to watch the forced interrogation in the semi-lit room. The echo of the whimpers of man under torture was indoctrinated Marxist requested a red flag to be erected on his grave. that was the only desire of the ill-fated hero asked his executioner. I was only visualising myself sitting on the chair expose to ECT electroconvulsive torture. It was the case of bless in disguise, on the behest of the Soviet Red army stage a coup assassinated the leader and passed a decree of pardon. I went home contaminated

with PTSD. Harking back the whole scenario of that protest my action was understood ably my Icarus experience. The sad irony is that Icarus drowned and I survived. For yet another prolong incarceration, I assume with bit assuagement.

Next to me was sitting an army major who murmured tearfully "I've five children" raised his hand to reconfirm the precision of five, suddenly struck on the head by a guard with the caveat;" no talking". Didn't see him after that night and not aware of the whereabouts of his five children.

One of the dreams I dreamt; I've replaced **Parmenides**, on the journey the horses carry me to the wish of my heart, set me out to the world-renowned way of the demi-god. The set up was ever more fabulous with the daughters of the Sun leading the way, the horses being very wise, and I was transported in a chariot brought to the gates of the road of night and day. The gates were locked and watched by personified justice. This goodness, justice, greet me the fear I had for the long distance, I strayed from the land of mortals.

I'm on the pathway to recover now with LPU London Pathway Unit. Though, adhere old principle: I will not go where the path may lead, but, I will go where there is no path and leave a trail.

In reflection my solipsism continues, I was not a paragon of excellence, born in the world where only the chaos and injustice reigning the universe.

What happens now? perhaps, the Italian adage seem noncommittal plausible answer,

Ki Sera Sira

**Mo**

## Do you want to know a secret?

### Gardening and therapy: seed to growth

Do you want to know a secret? Everybody does. And I have discovered a powerful one that I want to share with you. A secret that literally changed my life.

I was a very negative person, who always had negative things to say. Due to abuse in my past and growing up in a town with a negative atmosphere, my outlook on life was, “If I don’t expect good things, I won’t be sad or disappointed when it doesn’t happen.”

Since I started gardening and living on the Pathway Unit, I began to believe in myself. I had made a lot of progress in changing the way I thought about things, and the way I spoke to myself and others. I was still speaking negatively at times but not at the level I once was. But still I was not yet experiencing the positive changes in my life that I so much desired.

Gardening is a therapy like no other. Flowers, plants, trees – all these have emotions just like us. We have to be tolerant towards other people’s behaviour. Flowers have to be tolerant against harsh weathers. There is not much difference between us and nature. We both grow from seeds, we need love and care, our personalities can be challenged, we can both become stressed and suffer trauma. Gardening through therapy helps me to relax, gives me purpose and keeps my mental health at a distance.

All the things we do on the Pathway, we also do in the garden. So if, like me, you struggled and found it hard to deal with your emotions and to let people in, just think about a favourite flower. How would you treat it? And what does it mean to you?

We can all get growth, but starting from a seed is never easy.

**Graham**



## Life Story

When I was younger,  
I remember the flashing lights of red, white and blues,  
Cause my father would flip out but it was the booze,  
Fight for his kids or his new family, who will he choose,  
But that's a fight any child would never expect to lose.

As I looked in her eyes I saw pain I couldn't bear,  
She doesn't normally show it so it's something really rare,  
Mum said "Sorry I tried to fight but you're going into care",  
I guess life without power doesn't seem to be fair,  
But I gotta keep it and make sure he's aware,  
And maybe one day god might just answer my prayer.

My dad tried to be a father but that was just a fail,  
Cause he spent most of his time in and out of jail,  
But I can't talk cause it's like I'm starting to follow his trail.

But I'm gonna do all I can to make us not the same,  
Because after our childhood it's you I blame,  
Why couldn't you just stick around and stay in the frame?  
But, no you left and played a whole new game.

But I can admit he's started to do good,  
Started doing the things like a father should,  
I just wish I knew why you just got up and left,  
I might have understood.

**Bailey**

## Freedom From Prison

Some people say prison, some may call this slum.  
 Although we all seem different, we unite as one.  
 No matter whether we're old or young,  
 We should all graduate to the people we are among.

We may not be here for our own fault,  
 But it shouldn't stop us from offering each other support,  
 Share the love and willingness that we are taught.  
 And give another prisoner a boost before he goes to court.

Because as much as we seem like enemies.  
 The very person we judge by picture, has a lifetime of memories  
 that were once a story.  
 And maybe they felt the only way to deal with it, was taught by  
 hatred and fury.  
 But the slip up didn't hit home until he got sentenced by  
 the jury.

Whether it's a few months or maybe a year,  
 One person's strength is another man's fear.  
 Looking for the light at the end of the tunnel,  
 just hoping it's near.

Acknowledging togetherness is one of the greatest skills,  
 Wouldn't you rather share love, instead of hate?  
 Because hate can kill.  
 We're all in the same situation so let's share how we feel.  
 Cause I know if you share love, the wounds can heal.

We are all trying to get back on track.  
 And I ain't talking about the station.  
 Freedom is desperation.  
 So many different paths  
 But we are all trying to get to the same destination.

### Bailey

## Working with what we got

Locked up alone with thoughts,  
 And only things you're seeing is walls and bars,  
 So, you aren't really bothered if your mind just seems to run  
 off to Mars,  
 Cause the things you seem to replay are the things that  
 leave scars.

But they don't seem too visible,  
 But it doesn't stop me from being miserable,  
 Because I know I should be better,  
 So, to get back to myself,  
 I either make a quick phone call or re-read a letter.

I want to be able to say to myself I'm fine,  
 I really don't need to whine,  
 Because to be honest I ain't keeping track of time,  
 Because there's a price to pay for crime.

I wanna make sure I'm not mental,  
 I wanna make sure I'm 100% Bailey before I leave that gate and  
 my brother's waiting with the rental,  
 I wanna be able to look at my mum, I want her to be able to  
 recognise her son.

Because that boy who came in going to be gone,  
 I know you guys missed me, "Yes, it's been long,"  
 But I've been able to work on the things that were wrong.

The four white walls and a shelf,  
 Made me wanna work on myself,  
 Cause I ain't going to be defeated by my mental health.

**Bailey**

## Verbal bullets not real ones

Sometimes it's best to save the drama,  
Just to wait for more ammo and you'll get Karma,  
And it's going to hurt because we don't get armour.

Just be your own boss,  
Over every little thing you don't need to pop off,  
Cause if you wasted all the ammunition,  
That's already a loss.

Yes there'll be more bullets flying,  
But in this version, nobody is dying,  
I doubt we will even see people crying,  
We might just have an argument over who is lying.

Instead of deaths you're just getting fallings out,  
Instead of violence you're just getting a lot of clout,  
And this is what our world should be about,  
Then it will be a much better place without doubt.

Problem solvers go far, murderers get put in cells,  
Guns take ammo and shot guns take shells,  
Only in boxing you get saved by bells,  
Let's leave it to God to decide who goes to heaven or hell.

**Bailey**

## Gov's View

I know sometimes we can be a bit of a stress,  
When we have problems you're always here so we can address.  
You guys give 100% never any less,  
All you ask in return is no violence and make sure our room isn't  
a mess.

A lot has been spoken about and a lot suggested,  
There's been arguments that have been protested,  
But what we got to realise is,  
It isn't your fault that we got arrested.

Governors go up in stripes,  
Their main concerns are fights,  
Although a couple can be tight,  
I honestly feel most care about our nights.

I understand the rules of conduct have been set,  
And some things we ask for can't be met,  
But honestly,  
I can bet some feel like we're locked away like a pet.

So, the prisons trying to come up with new ideas,  
They've decided to have meetings with a few young peers,  
Asking about what most of us fear,  
Was a 'YO, I'm glad it's going up to 25 years.'

So I want to thank you for everything you've done,  
I guess life's just complicated when you're young, it must  
be hard as a father or mum,  
To be leaving yours just to look after someone else's daughter  
or son.

**Bailey**

## Untitled

Cold metal stuck between my chest plate  
Blood looks like rose petals dripping down my ribcage  
Red devil handing me a gold medal as I forfeit my  
right to heaven  
Soul seeping out my skin

**MoodyMoe**



## Where I'm From

Youths are armed puppets  
 Their mouths stitched shut  
 Easier to swing a machete, than to start  
 A conversation.

Girls are flowers ignored,  
 Their distant sun betraying their trust  
 They stand lonely in the dark  
 Photoshopping as there is no light for photosynthesis  
 They wilt regardless of the fact their petals  
 Now glimmer with new colour

Venomous spiders cling to street corners  
 Helpless fleas  
 Incarcerated in their intricate patterned web  
 Twisting, turning, struggling

There is no escape  
 Fleas exist to feed spiders' families  
 Remove one, and both insects become extinct.

**MoodyMoe**

## Where I Am

What makes people think the way they do?  
 An example of people in prison is one I view,

I go on the yard but the sun don't shine,  
 Don't mind me as I spend my time,

And as the day goes on, we get chained up,  
 Like a dog on a leash, it won't ease up,

But the day drags on, and it's all a lie,  
 Because the wings don't reform, it only takes our lives.

**MoodyMoe**

## Where I From

Where I'm from,  
there are patches of still green  
like the still greens I never ate when I was still green.  
Where I'm from,  
houses that beg for sustenance  
constantly regurgitate blood stains on the over-fed streets.

Tywane



GRN

Handwritten text on a piece of paper, appearing as bleed-through from the reverse side. The text is mirrored and mostly illegible due to the dark background and low contrast.

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## Untitled

I am the eyes you darken towards oblivion.  
Willows cracking in the forest, howling wolves, lonely and afraid.  
Ignite the darkness.  
The white wolf approaches.  
Even demons become prey.  
I wish I could spend a year in silence to better understand  
or whisper.  
To love so deep it reaches the highest mountain peak.  
I wish I could pass through the forest of life.  
Knowing only peace with my eyes.  
In the depths of a white winter, a rose misses the Sun's embrace.  
A kiss no longer feels like kissing.  
Shattered hearts need fixing.  
Tears so small they pass through the eye of a needle.  
I know the sound of your love, even when I forget your name.  
You know I'm conceited, yet you can't help loving me.  
It's simple philosophy. This relationship is all about me. It's just  
the country beer drinking wannabe.  
So tell me you wanna see more  
And I'll start to begin, no reciprocation required, just the sound  
of my egotistical wildfire.  
At midnight cliché of a synthetic appreciation of not being lonely.

**Bradley**

## Paradise

Paradise is walking hand in hand with mother.  
 Where the only confinement is your imagination.  
 The rain on your face is as welcome as the sun on your back.  
 The journey is not a destination.  
 It is an exploration of the wonderful mundane,  
 not screaming insane.  
 The wind and departed friends ruffle my hair.  
 Wildlife is not angry at my intrusion.  
 Each step wipes my mind of trivia.  
 The sweeping landscape will always be my escape.  
 A trillion twinkling stars light my way home.  
 Remove my shoes and give the dog a bone.  
 No reservation needed for tomorrow.  
 Paradise is not a double six or a royal flush, not a walk  
 on the wild side,  
 Just a stroll to the final understanding.

**Daniel**

## What Are You Scared Of?

What are you scared of?

You sit there with your hollow faces and *you*,  
 you look through me to this place that I'm in  
 like this is a reflection of what I hold within,  
 like you think this can tell you who I am,  
 the choices I've made, and where it began.  
 But you miss one thing:  
 you don't go to the zoo to understand the jungle.

See, every night when my cell door slams shut,  
 hardened steel against concrete and brick, two feet thick,  
 I turn to my window where iron bars divide even the light  
 and I laugh because, as *they* walk away,  
 returning to their own prisons of self-imposed  
 cellular confinement,  
 limiting themselves in every way *unimaginable*,  
 I skip straight on past them.  
 Free of the confines they place on my body,  
 my *mind* knows no such limits.  
 It is pitiful, how little is seen of all I achieve:  
 every single night, *I am FREE*.

Now consider the question you hold in your head;  
 the one you could never ask out loud.  
 It's been there for a while now  
 and you've always thought that maybe  
 you're the only one who doesn't know the answer.

Which is why you could never ask.

But you're not.

So now, let me ask you this:

What are *you* scared of?

When I was a boy, I had a dream that I was already grown up.

I was standing shirtless at the top of a mountain in the

whirling snow

and my bare feet burned against the ice.

Suddenly, a great force grabbed at my limbs and took hold

of them,

pulling my arms out wide.

I screamed out, but felt no pain as the force carried me slowly

into the sky.

As I soared, suspended in the air by pure energy,

a magnificent light grew bright in my chest where my heart

should have been

and shone out through the skin,

melting away the blizzard in an instant.

At the time, I thought this was a destructive light;

one that would incinerate the world.

So I *was* scared.

I was scared of *myself*.

But later, I realised that my light did not have to be destructive.

My light was a healing light;

a light of love.

And, as I stand here now, I swear,

I would give you my light in a heartbeat

if I thought it would help you somehow

because now I'm scared for *you*.

I'm scared you'll waste your own light

and never even *see* it yourself,

let alone share it with anyone else.

I'm scared that you will forget how free you can be

and that you'll keep yourself forever in chains,

unable to see past the iron bars of your own windows

to a world that craves your light.

I'm scared that the shadows are growing in this world and that,

if you can't break free of your limits,

they will overcome you

and we will *all* live in darkness.

I'm scared that perhaps you don't even believe you are capable

of so much

and that you doubt all that you have to give.

So right here and right now I say that I am *not* scared.

I stand in front of you and I open my chest.

I show you my heart.

I show you my fears.

I give you my light.

And I ask you this:

What are *you* scared of?

And why do you hide

from your own light?

**Adam**

## What Are You Scared Of?

Innocent eyes of children, afraid of the dark.  
 We took the stars for granted:  
 Magic lights protecting us  
 from and through the night.

We noticed most  
 those that flew.  
 The shooting stars  
 of naive wishes (rarely granted);  
 Then those that drifted slowly,  
 floating through the years;  
 east,  
 west.  
 out of sight,  
 out of light.  
 One star alone  
 shone consistent;  
 never moving,  
 never fading;  
 Our northern star  
 guiding us true,  
 leading our way home.

Still often we were fooled  
 by dark clouds closing in;  
 both yours and ours.  
 We feared that you had left us;

stopped shining.  
 You never did.  
 We only had to see  
 beyond the clouds,  
 beyond the darkness;  
 to have faith in you  
 and all that you taught us.  
 We only had to keep on course,  
 through the darkness and the night,  
 until the clearing of the skies  
 and the coming of your light;  
 forever shining  
 forever bright.

And here amidst the shadows,  
 cast long at the setting of your life,  
 there's a light that shines brightly;  
 one that will never dull.  
 There is a star in our hearts.  
 You put it there.  
 You taught us.  
 You loved us.  
 And it will shine eternal;  
 leading us through the darkness,  
 guiding us through the night,  
 leading us safely home,  
 and guiding us through life.

**Adam**

## Untitled

I'm not broke, but I need fixing  
If only tears had rolled down my face when I walked out  
that door.  
That's when I lost it under the whitest moon in August.  
Is this where I mend or break?  
A crowded room is now the loneliest of places.  
This is exhausting.  
Perhaps the final white light is calling

**Bradley**

## Untitled

Craving that fix  
Ordinary looking man  
lost out here  
Orchestra been played  
Ukulele making sound  
Raising the stakes.

**Calvin**



## Untitled

The sloping hills of green  
 From an image I once seen.  
 The climb is one to digest  
 At the top of nature at rest.  
 My view is one-of-a-kind  
 To be in peace inside of my mind.  
 Sun shining all year round  
 Watch birds gliding, no chaos or sound  
 In the distance, rivers and creeks  
 In between mountains peak to peak.

Corey

## Garden of Eden

Still searching for that Garden of Eden – Is it that picturesque farmland in Sweden – Is it that brand new Ferrari with keys in – Is it seclusion or is it laughter and freedom – Is it Ibiza es paradis – White sandy coastline drinking sex on the beach – Is it that after a long walk resting your feet – Is it that other side grass that's greener – Is it being classed as a leader – Or facing challenges with a calm demeanour – Is that Garden of Eden large or meagre – Is it the teacher who learns to teach – Or learner who learns to reach their goals – Is it supporting actors or leading roles – Is it that beach body no photo shop – Is it that family breakfast Coco Pops – Is it that calm when all of the commotion stops – Is it those Bond Street rows of shops – Is it that girl in the bikini, with its bitsy teeny weeny yellow polka dots – Is it a dream that you don't wake up from – Or is it when you wake up from a terrible dream – Is it when you're finally independent – Or is it when you finally feel part of a team – Where's that state of nirvana – Swimming in the Amazon just escaped from Piranhas – Is it early morning with family Christmas Day in pyjamas – Is it Dubai St Tropez or Bahamas – Is it when your lottery numbers come in in the paper holding a big cheque – Is it when the Judge says not guilty when you're in court looking a big wreck – Is it when a syringe injects your skin and you can't feel a thing – Is it the FA Cup when Arsenal win – Paradise is it a marginal thing – Is it having no more bars on your win...dow – Is it fast cars and bimbos – far stars and king's robe – Au revours or intros – Slow starts or nymphos – Is it no traffic on ring roads – The sweet smell

of primrose – Is it holding that special thing close – That walk on  
a sunny beach when the wind blows – paradise...

**Jason**

## Untitled

Constructed of the life  
Of obedience  
Lost to the life of  
Order  
Utter extravagancy created from fluency of  
Rampancy pray avoiding structured food chain.

White paper drawn to the rigorous dance of  
Wind's lawless path.

Scattered migrants running towards a parting  
Sea met only with red depleted mist  
Of miracles from non-shown plastic  
Idols.

Lithium grey flowing through multiple  
Harvest holes originated from golden  
Offerings lost to the promises not  
Fulfilled from ones who needed  
Them the most.

The fragmented creator of all  
Colour clutched together anxiously  
By muscular green depleting veins  
Searching, holding, hoping for inexhaustible  
New order of colour.

**Joshua**

## From the top of the stairs

From the top of the stairs, I have all I need.  
 Too far away to be caught, but close enough to retreat.  
 From the top of the stairs, I am the king!  
 There is no one I fear, no one to hear me sing.  
 I hear you, but you don't hear me. Ha, ha! I am the king!  
 From the top of the stairs. I craft my skills  
 To understand but not be understood  
 From the top of the stairs, I'm always involved  
 But never present or never seen  
 From the top of the stairs, I am a spy.  
 I can laugh, shout, scream and cry. No one knows or asks why  
 From the top of the stairs, I learn lyrics to songs  
 I perform to stadiums 80,000 strong  
 From the top of the stairs, I am never alone  
 I have my imagination, my thoughts the perfect home  
 From the top of the stairs, I feel safe and secure  
 Down below, I hear trouble, I hear fights and the sounds  
 of blows.  
 From the top of the stairs, I learned never to trust.  
 I know husbands and wives giving in to their lusts  
 From the top of the stairs, I have all I need  
 Too far away to be caught, but close enough to retreat.

Lee

## A Day at the Beach With My Dad

“Before we go to the beach, I need to see a friend. We won't be long, son.”

Holding the hand of my father, my protector and role model,  
 he walks me through the entrance of a large building. Stepping  
 inside the building, I hear a familiar sound coming from behind  
 another door, a sound I hear so often throughout the night  
 at home. My father opens the door to the large room, I was  
 no longer listening in at the top of the stairs. An explosion of  
 noises, smells and visions overwhelm me. Looking through the  
 room, I see smoke drifting. Lingering in the air from people  
 smoking their cigarettes, I see so many people in one place and  
 what seems like 1000 conversations talking over each other. I  
 hear dominos clicking together, as they're being shuffled on the  
 table. I hear snooker balls hitting each other and slamming in  
 the pockets. Somewhere in the room, I hear music from fruit  
 machines and the reels dropping 1 by 1. The constant sound of  
 pints clinking together, either from people playing, giving a  
 cheers, or someone glass collecting. My dad walks me to a table,  
 lifts me up over the table and sits me in the corner. “Watch him  
 for me, please. I need to do something.” Sitting at the table, all  
 I can smell is ashtrays and beer, and old women's perfume from  
 the old women sitting either side of me. My eyes begin to fill  
 with water as they start stinging from the smoke in the air. This  
 is no place for a small child.

But I am no child. I am a grown up, here to learn my trade,  
 here to learn how to behave, how to talk, how to laugh. How to  
 parade and how to act. How words bring attention, the fonder  
 the better. "Give me the beer", I say. With two hands, I lift up  
 the giant pint glass to take a drink, pouring the beer down my  
 chin and soaking my front. I hear cheers and laughter from the  
 drunken coward. I feel loved like never before, oh how great my  
 life is going to be I'm part of the crowd, all eyes on me.

After hours passed, full of crisps and sweets, my father returns  
 to take me home. Holding my hand, my father turns and says  
 "You must keep today a secret or your mum will make me go  
 away." So when I got home and my mum asked, 'how was your  
 day', I learned to lie. So my father would stay.

**Lee**

## Untitled

I am the play, actor, played, chained, forsaken.

To sit in waiting  
 An adventure to be still  
 Achievement be found

Still waters I roam  
 A vast ocean I will seek  
 Horizon there's storms.

Her eyes looked down with a dark shade of red  
 Lessons learned from black shadows behind  
 Families laughed stirs green envy  
 Connections lost, alone in the blue ocean,  
 Guidance comes with white clouds above.

White is the colour of peace in its purest form.  
 Here I am as it shines with confidence.  
 In an instance black darkness knows it's name  
 To the nights where there is a new beginning.  
 Everyone wakes to a new dawn.

**Lee**

## Inquisitiveness

A chimp cracking a nut with a rock.

A fish looking out from under the water at the walking lizard on the rock.

Inquisitiveness,

Nothing comes from nothing. First a thought, and then a question. What if, how is that, is that real and this is true? A fish asked the question “why can’t I walk like the spider on the bank? Maybe I’ll give it a go”.

Where do I come from, where do I belong and who made the rules. Maybe I’ll grow legs and say hello to the spider on the bank. Nothing comes from nothing, everything comes from inquisitiveness to be inquisitive is to begin the greatest adventure of all. The truth.

Lee

## Jeti on the mere

A summer breeze, sending ripples across the mere, warm air fills my senses, the smell of still water. reed bees, cut grass and yellow daffodils that line in the water’s edge. A family of ducks quacking and the sound of swan’s wings flapping the water as she chases away unwanted guests. I watch you where you are, I watch how you are, how I long so much to belong like you, to never be lost, to know your purpose in life and to be loved by all who visit you. You are like Mozart on a piano, writing a symphony. I watch you sway elegantly, doing a waltz with your partner. You and the water are one. Each year I return and I still hear the laughter from years past, I close my eyes and feel the sensation of the cold water taking my breath away as my skin hits the water from the many summersaults and swan dives. Memories I hold so dear.

But now time has claimed us both. We are old and weary and we are both creaking in the wind, so I have come to say goodbye old friend. Thank you for the memories you have given me, for showing me how to walk on still waters. Until we meet again!  
Your dear friend,

Lee x

Lee

## My ancestor

The keeper of the land, a ploughman sewing the fields with his horse and plough.

A Devon man, 60 years old but strong as an ox. A husband to a strong minded woman, a loyal wife. His wife takes pride in holding down the fort at home. Taking pride in cooking fresh food from a farm. The year is 1156 on the Devon coast. They live on a farm and in an old farmhouse. Smoke bellows from the chimney around the clock. Eric is the name of my ancestor. He wears a frown almost like he is in a mood. Eric has a large boxed nose and a large scar down the left side of his face, from a battle he won protecting the farm from overseas vikings. Eric has an unkempt beard that sits on his chest. He walks with a limp, another war wound. Eric has huge shoulders and at 6 foot, he is a handful for anyone that gets in his way. Eric is a well-respected man from all over Devon, village to village and beyond. Stories are told of his ventures and acts of heroism.

But now he is retired and war is behind him. With two sons lost to war. It's just him and his wife, Margaret. Now, Eric is happy tending his fields from dawn till dusk, and home he returns to his food and a loving wife.

Lee

## Untitled

Monsters visit while we sleep,  
sucking our energy from our head to our feet.  
In a world that is real But beyond where we can see,  
they dwell in the darkness like a burglar and a thief.

The monsters grow stronger with all those who are asleep.  
They wait in ambush to corrupt lost sheep.  
Their power draws from us not knowing they are there  
and never knowing why they're worried, anxious or scared.

But the monsters are scared, and these monsters have a weakness.  
These monsters tremble in fear when you pray in the name  
of Jesus.

So say his name before you lay your head and pray to Jesus when  
you rise.

Then the veil will be lifted  
Then you will be see  
And the truth is Jesus will set you free.

Lee

## Rap About Prison

Man has been on tour for 18 years  
 Still keeping it real behind the steel  
 People keep on gassing and chatting not knowing how hard life  
 can be in HMP

I remember the days when man was locked up for 23 hours a day  
 What TV and DVD?  
 You'd be lucky to get a letter from your family.

Everyone was trying to burn time  
 Not knowing what's on their mind  
 People on meds and drugs  
 Trying to burn out their time

I've seen it all  
 What prison is about?  
 People in prison this day and age don't know how hard  
 prison life was  
 Prison life is just for fools  
 You think you can break the system, but it just breaks you  
 You think you can change it, but it just changes you  
 There is no way out unless you do the work and time  
 Then you might find some peace of mind  
 And get off this merry-go-round.

**Sean**

## Grendon Poem

Here I am, back at Grendon again.  
 Trying to do this therapy once more, again.  
 Hoping that this time will be the end  
 And I will not have to let people down over again.

Life at Grendon has been hard,  
 But if you try, you'll find the tools you need  
 To open the doors you cannot see  
 And hopefully start therapy  
 The way it's meant to be  
 Then maybe you'll get out and spend time with your family.

**Sean**

## Paradise

Paradise, what kind of word is this?  
 The feelings it evokes, the images it conjures,  
 It's sights, smells and sounds so far beyond the comprehension of  
 mortal creatures.  
 Who are we that yearn for it?  
 Are we deluded to seek it  
 Or does hope for it make us blind to our own reality?  
 For me, Paradise is the natural home of the soul.  
 From it, we come to, and to it surely we must return.  
 Or perhaps paradise, like beauty is in the eye of the perceiver,  
 To the deaf, sound is paradise  
 To the blind, any sight  
 To the one who fears the crowd, the solace, is their Nirvana  
 And to the one terrified of being alone, heaven is the company  
 of others.  
 Peace, desire, union, oblivion.

Also, if you eat a burger, plant a tree.

**Saif**

## No Fear

I had a dream that I had died  
 and in that dream found I could fly  
 a vast plain stretched from sky to sea,  
 broken only by a tower looming over me,  
 spiralling up those internal steps,  
 I thought less and less of the world I'd left.  
 Until in the topmost room, at the lightest stair. I encountered  
 sombre folk  
 with food and wine to share.  
 A few moments was all I could endure  
 before my mind insisted there must be more.  
 I stepped to the window to see blue sky and clouds  
 pushed open the hinge to feel the rush of the wind  
 and without fear of regrets  
 or even goodbye. I stepped out into the blue  
 and flew.

**Saif**



## Red, Beige and Blue

In murmuring hearts  
of this grey and peasant land,  
a softly rusting phone box,  
raptly red and obsolete,  
belligerently stands;  
icon of an empire on its crumbling  
pee stained feet.

In sallow pink front rooms,  
vexed blood dallies  
through the shattered  
amethyst veins of stalwarts  
sat on arthritic hips,  
thinking that old treasured box  
is destined for the tip.

In pristine beige tea,  
reedy biscuits are baptised,  
as floral drapes and frowns  
turn the air a mottled hue,  
and the wretched yearning  
for vivid vanilla glory,  
limps on into the blue.

**Nicholas**

## A Colourful Life

In the beginning, there was yellow. “Where did I come from, mummy?” “You were born under a gooseberry bush, dear.” Of course, I don’t remember that, but I knew which one it was. There was a row of bushes at the bottom of the garden and it was the odd one at the end of the row. The rest had normal bitter green berries, but mine had sweet yellow ones. They told me I was born early, and yellow with jaundice. But I knew better: it was that sweet bush that made me yellow.

What I do remember was the green of a trek to Nonsuch Park. Our trips there began with a marathon hike across the recreation ground’s green grass. Then came the towering green trees of the forest we trudged through. Once, Nonsuch was Henry VIII’s palace. But I don’t remember that, just the vast green fields as we came down the hill.

There was still green when we moved to London. Not grass-green – paint-green. Grandpa only ever used green paint – the fence, the gate, my swing, the shed, the garage – everything was green. And what of Nonsuch? While I wasn’t looking, it shrank until the rec was just one football pitch wide.

Meanwhile, my rainbow journey continued to blue. I became fascinated by electronics and radio. Listening to Sputnik beeping across the heavens. Or the news of JFK’s shooting as it is passed between US ships in the Med. Why blue, you ask. Anyone will tell you electricity is blue. Just watch a spark and you’ll see, but don’t watch it too long or you’ll never see another colour again.

Growing up, I became a bearded, rebellious student. No more

following the rainbow colours for me. Next, it's a pink tail coat and top hat. Oh no, I'm not wearing them, that's the commissioner at The Bank of England. I'm the apprentice Service Engineer with a college scarf flapping over my shoulder. Even then, The Bank used facial recognition for security. If he didn't recognise my face, I wasn't going to get in to fix their computer.

Servicing was fun while it lasted, but getting back to uni was more fun still. We've come full circle back to yellow too, or rather brown which is dark yellow in disguise. My Prof liked playing the country squire with a stable yard at the back of his house. Weekends, I'd go to visit the two chestnut-brown thoroughbreds – Spook and Windsor. Now, I'm drinking port at breakfast and learning locker room chat. I sneak on to race courses for free as their groom and horse box driver. Windsor loves racing and Spook can run like a streak of brown lightning. Unfortunately, he never quite got the hang of taking his jockey with him as he lead the field past the post.

Now, the colour has gone. I sit alone and grey, like my hair. But I still have the colourful memories of growing up back then.

**Tony**

## A Rainbow World

Hot metal glowing red.  
The hammer falls,  
And fizzing, sparks are spread.

Sunny sands of yellow.  
Where parents sleep,  
And children play and bellow.

Great trees of green.  
Hidden there, a forest 'still,  
Slowly dripping it's sweet potheen.

A clear sky of blue.  
Cover for this rainbow world,  
Holding it all together just like glue.

**Tony**

## Poem

Behind the door through this time, starting to lose my mind,  
 Don't know when this madness will end.  
 Locked away from associates and friends,  
 Trying to find a way for this COVID to end,  
 Want to get back to normality and friends  
 And back to how Grendon used to be again.  
 Sitting around being a community again,  
 Mixing and laughing like we used to,  
 Games and fun and working as a team,  
 Being a part of Grendon isn't what it used to be,  
 But now we are out of COVID we can start again  
 Rebuilding Grendon once more again.

Sean

## What is 'wants and needs' or 'needs and wants'?

Life is always about 'needs and wants'.  
 You may not feel that you need it, but you would want it.  
 Always. Always want it even when you have it.  
 You can't help to want more or need another one.  
 Just like a drug, you need it, but do you really want it?  
 This could be used in so many ways about things you want or  
 need in life.  
 The only thing that you should ever need or want in life is to  
 breathe air, and to have a healthy life

SR

## Skating

I started skating at the age of 13. I used to go there for fun. On the ice I enjoyed it - it was my escapism. I only went to get girls. I used to show off, skate backwards. I used to go to Alexandra Palace or Lea Valley or I would go to Michael Sobell's in Finsbury Park or I would go to central London open air and I was about 13. When I was 14 I was at Michael Sobell's centre and they asked me if I wanted to help out on the ice and I gave them my time and help kids learn how to skate. I went on the evenings too, to the ice disco and helped out. I got picked up by a coach and he asked me if I wanted to join the hockey team. I said I was interested and I started training every Saturday morning. I did shuttle runs, zigzagging around the cones. I learnt how to do all that. I learnt how to wear the gear correctly. Shoulder pads, knee pads, shin pads, helmet cup. I played the odd one or 2 games a week as a sub. It was a very aggressive game. Broke my leg on the ice, got put in the cooling down box a few times. I enjoyed it. I wish I could have kept going. I chose a different path. On Friday nights after the games, groups of gangs would be outside the stadium and I ended up drawing myself to that side of it. Within the ages of when I started to commit crimes.

Skating makes me feel alive; feel at peace. Control. It is like flying. Even though you are on the ground, I can do it so well that it feels like I'm a different person. When I put my boots on, I feel so much control. All my worries are gone. I loved it - it was my passion.

SR

## Untitled

Dear crack cocaine,

I think that we should end this now. You have been nothing but a problem from the first time I used you. I believed that I could control you but it was the other way round. Don't get me wrong, it was fun to start with but later on it became quite scary and dangerous. I hurt so many people when I didn't have you, I robbed off my own family and robbed people on the street.

I even tried to give you up in prison and rehab but you had a way for me to find you and when I did it became more dangerous. I was sleeping on the street and begging for money. I was working in illegal clubs and even went as low as selling myself.

You see all the bad things that have happened in my life is because of you but now you are not in my life I am in a better place where I can move forwards without you and become a better person in myself and accept change.

Yes it is going to be scary, but with the right help from family and supportive networks I feel I will be able to keep the demand away from me. ·

SR



## Untitled

I protect my energy by putting boundaries in place. To stop myself from involving myself in negative or less positive behaviour. Such as setting myself a goal to achieve something possible and successful. One boundary might be me saying no to doing something bad and another one might be me saying yes to something that I know will affect me on my future in a positive way. I write lyrics because I like to show emotions of realness behind my music and to show what I've seen and been through. And for people to relate to my past and present. Or to feel them. To know that they are not the only ones going through that. I feel like putting my life into rhymes is sensory and an easier way for people to get feelings or stress off of their shoulders.

**Callum**

## Murray Grove

Murray Grove is where my heart is because it's where I've grown up my whole life and I've seen the changes on the estate and how the blocks changed. For example, more poverty. Due to houses and flat rent prices increasing and people not being able to afford it. But less gang violence in the hood has made the estate a lot more chilled out. You think it's planned but I'm only rapping what happened to me.

**Callum**

## Untitled

I represent the homeless people because they go through a lot of struggle on a daily basis and they get judged a lot!

The rose that grew from the concrete made me feel sad, careless and you can see what he's been through!

The singing is really good.

The video shoot is weird because of the dancing guy, the blue sirens remind me how loud and flashy they are, and it reminds me of the police!

**Bogdan**





## These bars

God help me! Almighty, ask for help seeking happiness, oh! Lord, dark thoughts inside my head right now! Nothing to lose, my choices left those broken-hearted, behind walls, locks turn up to me to turn my life arounds, instead walking head down, self-esteem running low, a page full of commas and apostrophes to explain, longevity, struggles. Thought in my mind change daily, regime stays the same, stop watching time, never lettin' go! Dominance defines my logic pen. All day every day a reminder to the deception and woes I caused, not overdoing it trouble in the water 365 days cell dwelling, my backbone up against a wall like Jackson's. Can't lose focus. Gotta break the code or matrix, yearning or scheming, what's up! Yours sincerely...

**Martyn**



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## I Come From

I come from a place where toxic love is the only love  
I come from a generation where sex, drugs and money are the  
only things I've ever wanted.  
I come from a place where drugs are cheaper than food,  
Where girls care more about what they look like than  
their grades.  
I come from a house where a mother used to starve herself just  
to feed us kids.  
Where 40 hours a week are nothing more than a chore.  
I come from tough love.  
I come from raising myself.

**Kika**

## I Come From

I come from anger.  
No father or mother figure.  
A dark and untrustworthy world.  
A place you can never call home.  
A roof over my head by a single mum.  
A life of pain and drugs, a life of knives not being put down.  
A life you look for safety.  
I come from myself.

**Alicia**

## Dear Sadness

Dear sadness,

I hate it when you enter my life. I hate it when you take away all my motivation and make me doubt myself. I try to ignore you and remind myself I can do anything I put my mind to, but sometimes you make that hard.

Dear sadness,

You are tough. But I am tougher.

**Saphiya**

## I Come From

I come from a single mum household.  
I come from nightmares disguised as dreams.  
I come from years of pain buried deep within.  
I come from a mum who taught me how to be strong.  
I come from a mum who taught me that my race is beautiful and  
I shouldn't let anyone tell me different.

**Saphiya**



## Need To Change

Growing up he wasn't a bad kid he just hated the idea of authority, he never listened to what he was told, he believed nothing could touch him, his 21st birthday arrived and as the big steel door slams behind him, he realises karma is staring right at him. He isn't too worried but the reality of his situation isn't so good – his court date arrives and he's excited because he has it installed in his head that he will walk free. This never happened. And he was soon about to learn how it feels to be serving more than half a decade behind bars. He goes back to the wing acting like nothing happened but deep down he feels regret, anger and resentment. This anger will surround him 24/7 and was there almost every day. This effected his daily routine, right up to the 6th security transfer which was different from the others, his friends no longer with him, all released living honest lives, parents fed up with him and his younger siblings grown up without him to see, he felt lost and broken until a third sentence came his way was consecutively. Reality flashed before his eyes and he realised it's time to change.

**Joshua**

## Track Name Blocked Off

Catching extra charges in pen  
 Wanna touch road dunno when  
 Case in the papers known by man  
 Valentino trainers in the seg bcuz I can

Got ratings fat portions in the block  
 Down ere Christmas pad mate got things in a sock  
 Enhanced prisoners on servery know my name  
 Because on the roads and in the jail I'm still da same  
 Took my case to trial remand I remain  
 'No evidence' got nuttin to lose or gain  
 Trues on da label you're not in my lane  
 I'm innocent officer I play da game  
 Couple days writing tryna stay sane  
 Second time in bricks you should feel my pain  
 16 month remand 'no gym' but I train  
 CPS want man got a defence clued up brain  
 Co-dee snitching putting me in da frame  
 Already certified not taking the blame  
 Waste of time need back on road wid Wayne  
 Trap up wood end take my mum on da plane  
 Catching extra charges in pen  
 Wanna touch road dunno when  
 Case in the papers known by man  
 Valentino trainers in the seg bcuz I can

**Joshua**

## STOP! ‘n’ Read

Hello,  
 You, yes you,  
 You better read me slowly  
 Because I have a few things to tell you,  
 I have been where you are – I’ve been through hell too,

Now there is something you must understand.  
 Hi, my name is Will and I am just a man,  
 N’ I am trying to figure out who I am.

We all go through this at some point in our lives,  
 Battling demons running rampant recklessly through your mind.  
 My piece of advice will lay dormant till read  
 So if you are reading make space  
 For when the time comes that you need to fight  
 Only when your life is at stake  
 You can let your anger fully take shape.  
 Every push, every shove, every insult, every dig,  
 Every time someone sought out to hurt you.  
 Let it out, don’t care,  
 Won’t care,  
 Wouldn’t dare. Let them try,  
 Personally I have saved up enough anger  
 To light up the sky,  
 They can try to calm me down but I’ll end it abrupt,  
 Coz I know one day I’ll need to erupt

So please save your anger cuz you never know  
 You may go too far, so don’t let it go

Will