

# *The Beat Within*



THE BEAT WITHIN • A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF WRITING AND ART FROM THE INSIDE • VOLUME 13.15

Every Day

In a Battle

Real

Hope



**Welcome** editorial note readers! We have for you our latest issue of writing and art from the inside. Given we took last week off from workshops, we have pushed ourselves yet another week behind in our pursuit of being a somewhat timely weekly. Anyway, this week we want to hand over the computer keyboard to our go to editor, colleague and friend, Omar Turcios, who has so kindly stepped up to type the following words for you loyal ed. note readers. Omar!

What's up with all The Beat Readers? For us it's just another week of grinding and trying to print out The Beat Within for all you to read. As I'm sitting in the office here in San Francisco, CA, I'm reclining in my chair, thinking 'bout the old days. I'm sitting here writing this editor's note bumping the old school classic 2Pac "All Eyes On Me" disk 2.

You know, I first learned about The Beat when I was locked up in one of these shady county juvenile halls. When my time was getting close, I asked our Beat facilitator if there might be a place for me. He told me to check in when I touched down. I did. I've been here ever since — nearly five years!

There's nothing to do but to reminisce on how the old days were. Remembering people that done passed away, reminiscing on high school days. And, as I'm getting older, I'm starting to realize how hard life is. And it's only gonna get harder. Rent is rising like the body count total for the war in Iraq. Everything is expensive now. Fast money is starting to look sweet right now, but I can't afford to go back to jail. Most of you cats that's reading this are worried about your pairs of shoes, a pair of Girbauds, and hustling for a scraper with 22's on it, all the tight fits and chains, and hats, and trying to pop at females or dudes (if you a female).

Some of y'all might be complaining right now that you in the hall, or ranch, etc. because you're eating nasty food, and wearing the next person's drawes. If you don't like jail then why you gonna put yourself in a position to get in trouble with the law? Why do all the hot things you doing? Just for a car with rims, watches, jewelry, and all the rest of the materialistic things you can buy.

We all need to take the time to appreciate this day. All those things can wait. Those cars, clothes, etc. are still gonna be there whether you're dead or in jail. Life goes on with or without us. The world continuously spins, and doesn't stop for anybody. So whether you in the State Pen, J-hall, Or scott free, take a moment to appreciate this day. It might not be going the way you want it to be going, but it's another day of life. Regardless of what your situation is you put yourself where you're at today in life. And even if you're not happy with the outcome of your actions, or your current situation, you should be appreciating the day. Period!

If you want to see a bright future, you gotta have something to look forward to. Call your mama, (or guardian or a loved one) and tell them you love them and miss them. Call your brother, your sister, your auntie, yo' potna, yo girl/ boyfriend whoever. If you can't call, write them. They will be happy to hear from you and in return so will you. And if you don't have nobody to call or write to, write a letter to yo' potna, roommate, or maybe even one of the counselors you're cool with. When we're locked up, we always think about the people that show us love and care for us. But when we're on the outs, we don't think of them that much. Obviously, because we're too busy with our lives getting into trouble or whatever you may be doing. So take the time to show some love back.

Me myself, I'm over here at The Beat Within. I've been here for four years, going on five at the end of this year. And I have had the privilege to read all your life stories, and poems. I've seen writers for The Beat Within come in and out of the halls and some even graduate to the pen, CYA, or county jail. I sit in this office every week editing y'all pieces, but at the same time I'm reading them, and I feel y'all. I wouldn't wanna be locked up eating county food being away from all my loved ones. I see y'all writing down stories about your life and the mistakes you've made.

I learn from them also. I learn from all you young people's mistakes because I'm still learning. I don't know it all. I'm still a youngsta myself. I haven't lived that long. I'm 22 years old. And I make mistakes also, but it's about learning from them. I been to the hall, I been to county jail, and that's nothing to be proud of. What you should be proud of is staying the hell out of jail, and the negativity that comes with that lifestyle.

But at the end of the day, I take a look at what I go through and realize that it ain't shhh. There's other people that live their lives with bigger struggles than me and you. There are people in other countries that really don't have anything to eat. They don't have no KFC, Mickey D's, Burger King, Popeye's, all the shhh we have out here in America so we can indulge our chunky stomachs.

I read The Beat Within, I am a product of The Beat Within because I'm still here at it today, not only working, but still writing, still striving and living life exactly how I was living it before. Except this time, I'm trying to make it better for myself. I'm trying to live the good life. I want to be successful. I'm trying to get it just like all of you. I wanna ball out and have things too, and give everything I can to my twin daughters. But I'm not gonna risk my freedom for none of that. If I'm in jail I won't be able to feed my daughters or even be a father for them by sitting behind them bricks. So forget that. I'm not gonna throw away my freedom over some chump change. My freedom is worth more than a car, more than some expensive fits, more than 22's or 24 inch rims. It's my life and I'm in control. I'm in the driver's seat. Y'all should be too.

This week our topics discussed in our workshops prior to the writing that is featured in this awesome issue is, "The Stranger" - Write about a time when a stranger (not related to you, nor your friend) was kind to you and/or helped you in your time of need. How did you happen to meet this person? Why do you suppose this person helped you out? Did you two become friends after? This week tell us in detail of a time a stranger helped you out, or when you did the same for someone else.

Our second topic, "The days when I don't want to go home..." - There are times when we find that it is hard to go home to face our parents or family members. Sometimes it is because we've gotten into trouble at school or got into a fight and don't want to deal with our parents yelling at us or not understanding our feelings. Or we don't want to go home, 'cause there is a lot of pain and sadness in the house. This week share a time when it was hard for you to go home. Why was it difficult? Where did you go instead and was there someone else who was able to listen to you and understand your feelings? Or when did you know it was cool to go home?

Lastly, "Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness" - How does it feel when you lose someone close to you? One father who lost his only son to murder, described it as a nuclear bomb going off inside his heart. How would you describe it? How does it feel to take revenge when someone has done wrong to you? Does it make you feel powerful? Does revenge take away the feeling of loss inside of you? How did you learn about revenge and forgiveness? Did someone teach you? Who? Did you learn from something that happened to you? Have you ever forgiven someone for something shady that they did? How did it feel to forgive? When you hang on to hate, what happens to you inside? How can you deal with pain and loss without killing pieces of yourself by taking revenge? What do you think your neighborhood and your family would look like if we had a chain of forgiveness, a cycle of forgiveness, instead of a chain and cycle of revenge and violence? How would your neighborhood and community be different? Is this realistic or even possible? Why or why not?

All right this issue goes out to all the young typist in our office who step up tremendously each week, after school, in helping us put out the cleanest weekly possible. Thanks for your great work.

OK, see you all next week! Best!  
End of CD2 of 2Pac's "All Eyes On Me"... What to put on next? Any suggestions?

**The Beat Within**, a weekly newsletter of writing and art by incarcerated youth, is published by Pacific News Service.

At The Beat Within, we go through a lot of trouble to censor inappropriate sexual remarks, foul language, and gang references. There is enough tension in our communities already—we don't aim to bolster it. It is in The Beat's interest to promote peace and unity. Our goal is to educate one another.

The Beat Within publishes the opinions and views expressed by the participants in our workshops. This is simply the pure voice of the youth. The views you read do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher, editor or staff. All rights are reserved. Nothing from this publication can be reproduced without our written permission.

**To our writers:** What you write could be hazardous to you. Your words have consequences, and could be used to incriminate you. Try to illuminate your feelings and viewpoints without running the risk of providing ammunition for those who might use your words against you.

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**Art:** Much props to everyone for the great art this week.

**Spiritual Advisor:** Jack Jacqua

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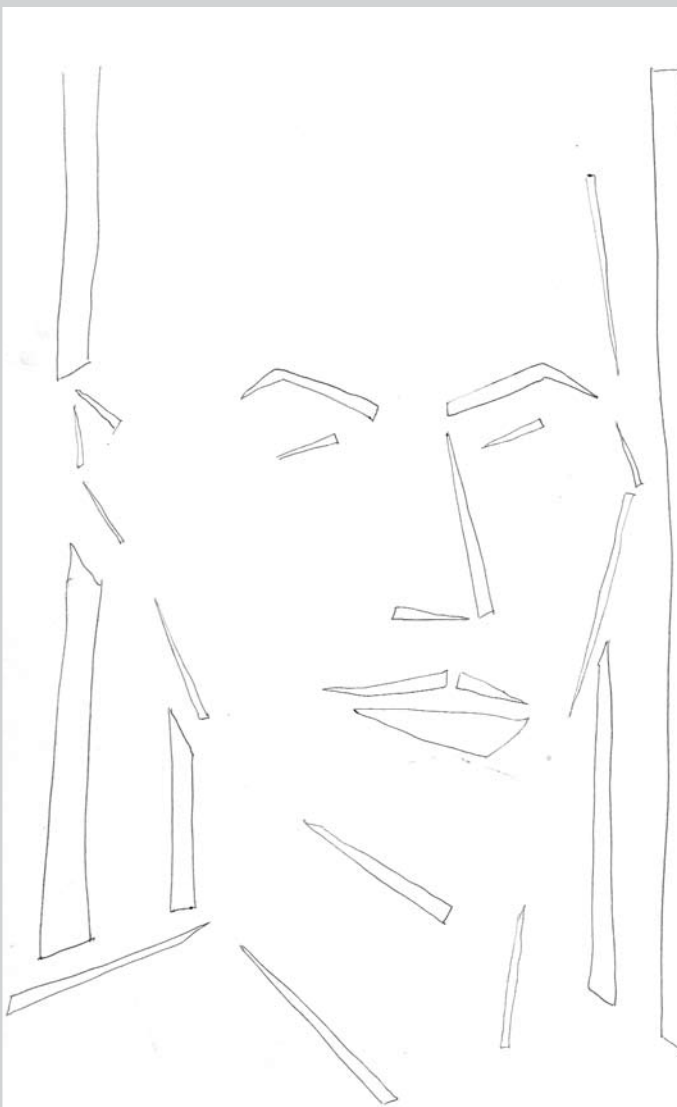
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## The Beat Without 49



## Time To Make A Change

It's time to make a change. Life's gone go on, and I rather make the best of my situations and downfalls than keep it going.

It's a shame it took me to have to be in here and look at my age and be like, "16 three months away, and then that two years gone go by fast!" I'm ready to get my shhh together. In the end, it's me that feels this pain and this hurt and I'm ready to overcome those things and make a change.

I'm ready to leave these ninjas out here that's 'bout one thing. Already don't got time for these rackets females and messy business. When you hear Miesha, I want it to be like that part of the song in "Independent" — "She stay on her shhh. She got her own shhh."

It's a reason for everything in life and I've been woken up with my expectations for myself, the ones that's in my life telling me what to do and how to do. If anybody doing anything for me and my life it's me. Ain't nobody really staying by my side through it all. They make it worse, so I've gotta overcome this by myself. That's why it's time to make my change in life.

I'ma leave this system with a good bang. I'ma be known, but by time I'm out, it's gone be in a good way. My change starts with my emotions and knowing what's good for me, and I know that already.

So, I'm starting with those that's negative and not 'bout shhh don't get no part of Miesha's time. I'm not gone talk about what my change is gone be. I'ma show the system.

**-Spongebob, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: This reads like a Declaration of Independence — independence from a way of thinking, independence from negative influences, and independence from a county/state system of control that makes your decisions for you. Congratulations, Miesha. You've taken the hardest step in a journey of life, and that step is the one in your head, a new way of thinking. From that, all else will follow. Never mind showing the system. You are showing yourself, and that's much more important! Now, put the actions you know you must behind these wonderful words, and watch what happens.*

## Just Forgive

Revenge is a powerful thing

Some people run on revenge

People act upon revenge without thinking

Forgiveness would make life so much safer

Just lose the hatred and let your heart run off happiness

Instead of beatin' an ass or bustin' a cap, just walk away

Break that cycle of hate

Try to forgive just one person and see how it makes you

feel, and see what happens...

bet the end result will be good.

Just forgive.

**-Bailey, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: We are sure that your ideas would be the proper one to resolve these issues and bring peace to all. What did it take you to know this? What made you say this? Have you forgiven someone who has done something wrong to you? If so, is easy? What does it take to do so? Please, tell us we are anxious to learn and be able to forgive.*

## Hard To Go Home

It seems like it's always hard to go home for me because in my dad's home all there is, is madness and arguing.

My dad has always put me and my brothers down by just saying stupid things like "your worthless" and "Your not going to amount to anything."

I always have wanted to tell my dad off, but I get too scared. I hate to face the music, but my dad will never change and so maybe this is just how it's going to have to be?

**-Christine, Land Of Enchantment**

*From The Beat: No it does not have to be like that. Yes, it maybe hard to deal with problems at home, but they are only minor problems, problems that can be worked out. There are professionals out there that can help. Ask your father if he would be willing to do family counseling? Some times our children have to be the adult, so we as a parent can refocus on what we are doing wrong. We, as parents, are human and do make mistakes. We hope and pray your father is open to change.*

## Thank You

What it is with The Beat? Or, should I say, what ain't. Today, I really don't have nothing to write about, so I wanna give thanks. The Beat is a great magazine that always told me I could do it even when I said I can't. People (including myself) always want to fit in or be a part of something. In here I've had a lot to think about, such as what I'm going to pursue upon my release date. I've been strategically thinking about how I can accomplish my five-year goals I came up with.

First and foremost, I'm going to start by changing my attitude, and the people I hang around. I know a lot of people probably say that every week, but I've pondered really hard, and the best way to stay away from trouble is to be by yourself. Some people think that's hard, but I'm becoming a man and men can stand alone. I know there is a lot of peer pressure with people and their friends. So I know it's going to be hard for me to just walk away from my friends, because they might call me names like I'm a square and everything else. But I rather be a square and stay sharp on all corners than to be a circle and roll with any and everything.

Thank you. See ya next week.

**-Young Mari, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: The thanks go in both directions, Mari. One of the most satisfying things about doing The Beat (which can bring a lot of sadness and disappointments) is watching young minds expand, seeing boys turn into men. It gives us hope, and hope is what we all need to move ahead. If we disagree with anything you've said, it's this: No man (or woman) stands alone. You may need to change the people you want around you, but don't fall for the belief that you (or anybody) can do it alone. We all need help. We all need a community. And we all depend on others. About four hundred years ago, the English poet John Donne wrote, "No man is an island, entire of itself/Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main/...Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind..." It was true then, it is still true now. So, let us end where we began: Thank you, Omari.*

## What Is Money Worth?

What's up with The Beat? This Drew once again comin' at ya from the Max Unit. What I want to talk about today is money, and how much it's worth.

To many people, money is worth a lot. But in reality, it's just a piece of paper. Yeah, I know everyone hears that word a lot, "paper." To many people it's a thing to have. But is paper worth ya life? Would you really put paper on one of ya ninjas books, or do you forget about them when they locked down? How many people do you know that's selfish with they paper? Me, I know a lot of people that are.

Me, myself, I care less about that shhh. I know if it came down to it, for my family or my folks, I'll throw that shhh away with the quickness. For me, can't no amount of paper stop me from loving my family or my folks.

Nowadays, there's ninjas out here that forget about they family and will do anything for a couple of dollars. Don't get me wrong I get my money, but that shhh ain't worth my loved ones having to suffer. If I could have all the money in the world, I would give it to the women in my family because they deserve to be taken care of. I feel like the women in my family shouldn't have to worry about anything. The males should have to work for them. But the girls out here running around trying to do anything for a dollar. Ya gets nothing from me.

**-Drewski, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: It's funny how our love of money can take over our lives, making us forget some of the real treasures we have for nothing, like family, like freedom. Yes, money is important to live, but like you, we know far too many people willing to risk living for money. Maybe that's why the Bible says the love of money (not money itself) is the root of all evil (1 Timothy, 6:10). It seems like in this country, if you have money you're considered successful, even if you had to cheat to get it. And that's as true for the President of the country or the CEO of huge corporations as it is for the lowest prisoner in the hall.*

### The Harsh Reality Of Life

The harsh reality of life  
 Watch how it unfolds  
 Mother nature you just  
 can't control  
 Separated by the system  
 Made us into victims  
 Conquered by design  
 Wish my people could  
 elevate their minds  
 Realize that your  
 government doesn't care  
 about poor people  
 Separated by class  
 'Cause we are not equal  
 Begging for food and water  
 Polluting the air  
 Children separated  
 'Cause their parents not  
 there  
 Ended up with nothing  
 That's why I stand for  
 something  
 I'm definitely not running

'Cause Bush and them  
 are not coming  
 Flood waters raging  
 It's just freaking amazing  
 Who's a survivor?  
 'Cause I'm not a looter  
 Who got the guns and the  
 Hired sharp shooter  
 We got to get a higher  
 ground  
 Elevate my people with the  
 sound  
 On the microphone  
 You know how I get down  
 Want more out of life,  
 But Black people  
 We always gotta fight  
 Put my fist in the air  
 'Cause the world is not fair  
 Dedicated to the victims of  
 Hurricane Katrina

**-Bra bra, Alameda**  
 From The Beat: This is such a  
 powerful poem, Bra bra. Keep on  
 writing.

### Loss Of My Beloved Aunt

When I lost my aunt I felt real bad. I was very hurt. She was my favorite aunt and I had a really good relationship with her. When I attended her wake, it felt like a dream and I wanted to wake up. At the funeral I was a little more sane.

I was locked up when I found out she was sick. When I got out and went to the group home, she died four days later. My mom didn't want to tell me. My aunt daughter, which is my cousin, end up telling me. My heart felt like it stopped at that point.

I always used to dream about her. Then it stopped. Just the other night I had a dream about her. I was happy. Well, this is how I felt when I lost someone close to me.

**-Ebbie-W, San Francisco**

From The Beat: You've done a fine job of explaining how devastating it is when someone you love as much as you loved your aunt passes. We're sorry for your loss, and hope you live a long (and free) life so that you can keep her memory alive with you. We know she didn't want you to be doing the things that have led you here, so we hope you can honor her memory by getting out of here and staying out of here.

### That Special Someone

Man, I got to stay up. My mind's been going left and right, between what's right and what's wrong. I been trying to keep myself stable, but it's hard when half of your mind wants the best for another yet these people only care about killing a ninja.

What the hell is wrong with us kids? We need to open our eyes and see the world for all that it's worth, not just aiming to one goal of being a 'hood star. If that's what you want, go ahead. I ain't stopping you. I just want what's best for all the generations to come.

My mind's caught between all these topics and doesn't have a clue about what it takes to make a change. I can change myself, yet inspiring one to change their mentality takes a special person's words. I just hope I can be that special someone to help my generation succeed.

**-Bakgwai, San Francisco**

From The Beat: You already are a special someone, Bakgwai, even if you may never know who you've inspired. All you can do, as you say, is change yourself and hope through that change — expressed in words and in deeds — that you will help to change others who are lost and confused. We don't know "what's wrong" with those who have killing on their minds and in their hearts, but we can guess that the fact that the bigger society we all share, which is killing people left and right around the world, and spending our national fortune to do it (while the communities that produce the killing at home go begging for resources) has something to do with it. One thing that's very hard to accept when you have the desire to inspire and to change is that you cannot save the world. But you can try, and we admire you tremendously for that.

### When Pops Didn't Listen To His Son

It was time when my daddy didn't listen to me when I was trying to let him know 'bout one of his ninjas. His friend was doing something that we wouldn't never think he would do. We all was brought up together, and that ninja went bad.

This was the time I really needed my daddy to listen to me for the better. My daddy always told me to talk to him before I did anything, but this time he didn't listen because his friend was all he had.

Now I'm locked up because his friend couldn't stop talkin'. I'm not mad at my daddy for not listenin', but when is he going to start? I love ma daddy till the day I die, but when I needed him, he wasn't there for me, and that hit me hard, right in the heart. But that a lesson to be learnt. Love you daddy till I die.

#### Part 2

That was a lesson to be learnt, but would he listen next time? I hope he do. It's so hard to forgive somebody when they did something wrong 'cause it was too much pain and loss. And revenge is always not a good 'cause what you give out you get back. And nine times at of ten, it's worse. When you hang on to hate, you become a ugly person and people like that don't get on well in life.

Love always, your son.

**-Jr. Rocket, San Francisco**

From The Beat: Even though there are things in this piece that we can't agree with, we think you've done a fine job of putting down your feelings about a number of important things. (The part we don't agree with is that you are locked up because your pop's friend talked too much. You are locked up because you did things that allowed someone to talk about... If you didn't do those things, you wouldn't be here. There will always be snitches, sometimes even within the family, so the only way to escape is to give them nothing to snitch about...) But we admire you for trying to talk to your daddy, even if he wasn't ready to listen. And we also admire even more how you see that revenge and hate corrupt your soul and make you ugly inside. It takes a strong person to recognize that, and to write about it. We look forward to you sharing more of your knowledge with us.

### Changes Of My Wrongs To Rights

What if... If I turn my negatives into positives, will I still be in here? But you know what? I would change to my negative acts. Instead of robbing this person, I would actually go find a job and use the money to support my family.

What if... If I was the son you always thought he was — good and you trusted him 100% — but next thing you know he is in the hall? Well, I'm sorry Mom and Dad. When I come out, I would be the son you always want me to be instead of lying to you all the time.

I'm sorry for what I've done. Being in the hall really got my mind cleared up. When I get out, I would change into a whole new person. Instead of robbing, I would work, and instead of lying to my parents, I would speak the truth and to try my best to gain the trust you had for me back. Tomorrow (3/19/08) is one of the chances I would have to change to a whole new man. And I am willing to change with the support of my family and friends. But even without the support, I still willing to change.

But I know there wont be the word "without" because my family and friends will always be there.

**-Cai, San Francisco**

From The Beat: One thing we can see is that you are determined to be the son your parents raised you to be and know that you can be. You can turn all the "would" in this wonderful piece into "will" and never come back to a place like this. Our only word of advice is that change is a process, not a product. In other words, take it one step at a time. Move away from the things that have led you to this unfortunate holding station in your life, but don't expect everything to change overnight. Life is a journey of discovery that never ends, and is begun by putting one foot in front of the other. There is no doubt that you can do it. Now, do it!

### Thinking

Damn!!!

Thinking 'bout my moms  
 Thinking 'bout if my pops is thinking bout me  
 Thinking 'bout Lil' Teddy, free that man  
 Thinking 'bout if I should handle his funk  
 Thinking 'bout when I get out what am I going to do with myself  
 Thinking 'bout my haters  
 Thinking 'bout when I'ma see God or the Devil  
 Thinking 'bout all the enemies that's been knock down... hello...  
 Thinking 'bout why I'm thinking so much  
 Thinking 'bout the money that's stacked  
 Thinking 'bout who is gonna read this  
 Thinking 'bout who is gonna dismiss this  
 Thinking 'bout who speaking  
 Damn we miss you Teddy,  
 Thinking 'bout what Judge K thinking 'bout me  
 Thinking 'bout all the females I snatched  
 Thinking 'bout what God want from me  
 Thinking if he turn his back on me and just going to let me be man Free Lil Teddy  
 Thinking 'bout why my life is so corrupted  
 Thinking 'bout why my past is so destructive  
 Thinking to put the game of chess as my life  
 Thinking 'bout hittin' that lick  
 Or busting that character or even lettin' 'em go... na, can't do that...  
 Thinking if God died for our sins why do we still sin?  
 My brain hurts from all this thinking  
 Free me and Lil Teddy the streets is missing us  
 It's not even me thinking it's the devil speaking out of them walls Thinkin' 'bout how much blood has been shed  
 Thinking 'bout how many people want revenge  
 Thinkin' 'bout who died today  
 I can't think about nothing cause in reality you're doing the Thinking and you're a dead man that going to be put in that box or In that cell ...if you ask the statistics

**-Lil' two-one, Alameda**

*From The Beat: Thinkin' 'bout how many of our most talented young people waste their lives in jail/Thinkin' 'bout how you have potential to succeed instead of fail/Thinkin' 'bout how much life you deserve/Thinkin' 'bout how the road ahead has a few curves/Thinkin' about how you could do whatever you want.*

### Just To Deal With The Rain

As a little kid, I went off to school with my lunchbox. My uncle used to pick me up and take me home everyday. I used to absorb every little thing he did. I loved all of the stories he used to tell me. I took all of his advice.

Then one day he never showed up. My mom came crying. I couldn't believe he was in the grave.

As I got older, I started hanging out with his friends. They used to tell me all of the crazy stuff he once did. It was like history to me. Soon I fell in love with the life of crime - partying all night, hanging out at the beach listening to the wind. Sometimes I felt like I needed to come home drunker than usual just to deal with the rain that day.

I had a dream about him the other night. I was wondering where dreams come from? Rest in peace, Tio Marcos.

**-Oscar, Santa Cruz**

*From The Beat: This is a very beautiful piece Oscar, and very sad. In just a few words it lets the reader know a lot about you. From what we understand, although dreams have been studied for a long time, there's much yet to be learned about why we dream and how. We'll try to get some information to you about dreams and dreaming.*

### Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness

In my life, I've been through a lot of times where I've wanted revenge. There has also been times where I've been in the position of forgiving people.

It's hard to avoid a situation where you just going to get revenge. It may not be able to fix the situation, but it'll make you feel better for the moment. But still that is the wrong solution to it. But a lot of people don't realize it.

Forgiving someone is hard to do because sometimes you won't feel good forgiving someone for the things they've done. Me, I've forgiven people, and I've also held grudges to some people. But I'm mostly forgiving people than the other way around.

When it comes to revenge, I would want it if the incident just happen or around there. But as time pass by, I've forgave people that I've hold grudges for a while and I've also avoid getting revenge.

**-Ramon, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: We admire how well you explained your feelings about revenge and forgiveness. We're interested in how you describe what happens when you let a little time pass between whatever it is that makes you want to take revenge and the feeling that comes around later. Is there something between revenge and forgiveness, something that might make our communities safer if we let it develop?*

### I Never Want To Go Home

This topic is the best one that relates to me, sad to say. I never want to go home because of all the pain and sadness. I really don't have anything in this world but my mom, brothers and sister.

My dad is a hardworking man, but an alcoholic, so he is always arguing, he left my mom two times but this time he didn't come back. I would see him at his place but he kicked me out, drunk he was of course.

I live in an old mobile home park, in a small mobile home, two rooms, one bathroom. No carpeting, the house is pretty trashy. I never want to bring friends over because of how embarrassing it looks. I would love to take girls to my house, but I don't because of the same reason.

I wish I had a better life but I didn't choose it, I was born into it.

I stay the night with my homeboys, party all day and night and wake up at one of my boys' houses.

It's sad to see those whose parents give them everything in life but don't take advantage of it.

It's not ever because I'm in trouble or on drugs that I don't want to go home, it's just that I don't want to look at that place all messed up. I am thankful though that I have a roof over my head and somewhat food in the fridge.

My dad stopped bringing groceries and my mom doesn't work because she is an immigrant. So you know how that goes. She tries hard to find one (a job) though. That is why I started to sell drugs to help out some way, but I got caught too soon to even progress. She has some checks from her old job that she saved, but it isn't enough. No one understands how I feel or why I do the things I do, so those who don't know now you do.

I'm getting too into my life so I'll cut it short. If you guys want to hear more, put this story in The Beat, so I'll know if you do. I hope you guys do me this favor. And to those who got it made, don't mess it up. Listen to your parents. Well, 'til next week Beat I'm out. Peace.

**-Alex, Santa Clara**

*From The Beat: You are such a good writer Alex! Your honest piece on yourself touches our hearts. We do hope things get better for you and that you see that selling drugs is not going to make things any easier, only more hardships. To help your mom and yourself, you have to have patience and take the long road, go to school, maybe get a part time after school job, and get off probation. Take it one day at a time!*

## Ignorant Minds

Who's up Beat? It's Bakgwai. :) Ha ha. Can't wait to get out this place. Another month till court, >.<. I thought I was 'bout to get out two months ago, shhh, but I guess that's the way the cookie crumbles, ^^.

Anyways, I'ma pick up where I left off last week since I couldn't finish.

You can't be dismayed by these ignorant minds.  
Let them say what they want 'cause you'll continue to find  
That ahead of you waits the most cracking of times,  
Full of so many challenges and so many crimes.  
Do not be afraid to be who you are  
'Cause your own special talents will carry you far.  
And do not be alarmed to what you might hear,  
By the world that's weakened by hesitant fear.  
Too often uniqueness is wrongly suppressed.  
The ignorant minds keep the great ones repressed.  
They are too quick to point out the thorn of a rose  
Not seeing its beauty and gift to the nose.  
Always know that you're special, and do what you will.  
Don't listen to comments that make your soul ill.  
To be rich is a blessing that costs not a cent.  
It's about seeing the beauty of everyday spent.  
Always remember that time travels only one way,  
That is touched by the things that we do and we say.  
So when I sit in my cell I make myself whole  
Bettering myself body mind and soul.

**-Bakgwai, San Francisco**

*From The Beat: Ignorance is not a disease limited to those in the hall/ We like to "know what we know" even when it makes our lives stall/ But your mind is aflame, eager to learn all that will be/Not afraid of experience, not afraid to be free/We don't know what path has led you, at so young an age/To understand truths that come from a sage/But however you got here, from valleys to mounts/The past is prologue, it's the future that counts/So travel your path with care and respect/And recognize that what you give is what you'll get*

## Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness

Today they ask you to talk about losses. I lost my mother when I was four. She got stabbed to death on our living room couch. I remember that night like it was yesterday. My auntie Liz carrying me through the living room past the couch with a bloody white sheet on it and those small yellow boxes like the ones you see on T-V all over the floor.

They caught the man who did it and my whole family went to his trial. His lawyer said he was crazy and he was found not guilty.

Over the years I used to think about hunting him down and get revenge for taking my mother away. Then I would think about my mother and anyone who ever knew her said she was a very peaceful woman. I think would she want me thinking like that, and how would that make her feel? I am not going to lie and say I forgive him because I don't. And I honestly don't know what I would do if I ever seen him.

If I ever got the chance to talk to my mom I would be kind of embarrassed because I have been messing up for a long time and I haven't done that much for anyone to be proud of me.

People ask me how do you live with that. You can't really get over something like that, because a mother is one of the most important things in a child's life.

**-Jeremiah, Alameda**

*From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about your mother. But you do bring up a good point, you said if you ever got the chance to talk with your mom you would be embarrassed because you have been messing up for a long time. It's time to stop that trend. Time to make her proud of you. She's still watching down on you. She's still inside of you. You're still her son. She gave birth to a strong young intelligent man that's gonna do something positive with himself. Make yourself and your momma proud! We're pulling for you!*

## Struggle

Man, payin' the bills is a major struggle. Always have extra money to recoup so you can maintain your hustle. Always watch you're back so no one pops your bubble.

Every day in life you have to struggle and strive. I always find away to pull through it. That's why I'm still alive.

When will struggles stop? To me there will never be an answer.

I got a solid mom, but she's stuck at the house with cancer.

It's a struggle watchin' her in pain having to fight it all by herself. No matter how hard I try, that's a disease I can't do nothin' to help.

I got my older brother graduating from the penitentiary. He did five years so you know he's ready to come home.

My family struggles so much;

I have to provide the money to buy his clothes.

Man, another struggle is always gettin' locked up. But Lil' Bra kept runnin' his mouth; therefore he had to get socked up.

It's a struggle when the crime scene investigators Are holdin' your block up.

Watchin' my sister have a baby - that was something I can't ignore.

Ever since she made that baby boy, he's been my pride and joy.

But she goes and parties like its nothin'.

Every time I ask her about it, she's frontin'

So therefore, I struggle for my sanity.

Now, she is partying with hella dudes.

I ask her to tell the truth, but she refuses.

So therefore, I get pissed.

She looks at it like it just another dude, but I look at it like it's another name on my list.

I struggle to keep my mom happy in life.

Together we go through the struggle and strive.

Can't stop how I'm livin' without thinkin' thrice

Losin' my father to the pen—drug deal gone bad.

Bet he did what he did and didn't think about me.

Now I'm always in the hall with a pen mentality.

It was a drug deal he didn't have to win, but couldn't help himself. Left my mom stranded with five kids with no type of help.

**-Lil' Mousie, Alameda**

*From The Beat: You've lived the life of a thousand soldiers/you're just in your teens but you feel so much older/and now it's time to straighten your shoulders/you gonna live a better life than your pops? Or just harder and colder?*

## My Loss

I felt lost, when my cousin Anabelle died, because she did a lot for me. I can remember, when she took me out to her house. When I was like seven or eight years of age she bought me a Rhino bike it was gold and silver.

Man that was the best day of my seven year old life. I miss her to death when she died. I really wanted to cry, but I knew she would not have wanted me to.

If I could bring back her I would bring her back, but that cannot happen. So I have to live with the heartbreak. The only thing I can really do is help raise my little cousin.

**-Correy, Alameda**

*From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about your cousin. She sounds like she was a real special person in your life. But like you said she wouldn't have wanted you crying for her. But she probably wouldn't have liked it either if you were coming in and out of the halls. So make her proud and stay out the system and help raise your little cousin.*

## What Do You Do?

What do you do  
 When all you know  
 Is Pyrex stirs  
 And raging anger  
 Leads to vision blurs  
 And you know nothing  
 About the constitution  
 But can lead  
 A conversation about prostitution  
 Or drug distribution  
 Which leads to your  
 Being locked in an institution  
 What do you do  
 When you're not even 18  
 And your past haunts you  
 And only way to run  
 Is to drink, pop and light a few  
 Seriously, stop and be true  
 Tell me, what do you do?

**-T-Rex, Alameda**

**From The Beat: Terrific rhyme...So we put the question back on you - when temptation hits, what do YOU do?**

## Money Over Everything

I'm trying get to the riches  
 That's why it's money over beezies  
 I gotta manipulate her mind  
 And never let her waste my time  
 I gotta get my dough yeah you all ready know  
 She got me riding on four's  
 Yeah it's all on a roll me a fat purple blunt  
 And let her know it's time to stunt  
 I grabbed the Remy and start to sippin'  
 I give a damn if she tripping  
 Nacho do it for the streets  
 This purple game is too deep  
 I'm just trying let ya'k now  
 And I'mma do it till I d.i.e

She say she really love me she calls me her daddy  
 I'm all about my money she thought she really had me

**-Nacho, Alameda**

**From The Beat: You do it for the streets. Why don't you just do things for yourself? Why everybody wanna do things for everyone else but themselves? When you're locked up the streets aint writing you any letters or even thinking about you. Don't be a sucker, we have too many already locked up thinking the same we you think.**

## Novoj and Scooby

I have two sides of me. Novoj is the good side of me, Scooby is the bad side.

When I'm at school, I'm Novoj. When I'm on the streets, I'm Scooby. Sometimes when I'm at school, Scooby is there, but not most of the time.

When I'm with my family, I'm both. Sometimes my friends call me "Double" because I live the double life.

When I'm at home, I take care of my sister, chill with my mom and help her out. When I'm at school, I pay attention and do my work. When I'm on the streets, I take care of business. If you are my friend, you will see the both of me. If you are my enemy, you see a bad and disrespectful side of me. That's Novoj and Scooby.

**-Scoob, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat: Truth is, depending on the situation, we can seem to be lots of different folks. But we know that's just what it seems. In reality, each of us is a uniquely singular person with the potential to behave in various ways. What's important is that we learn to not let any one aspect of our personality get out of hand.**

## Forgiveness

Forgiveness is hard to get, hard to receive,  
 For the fact people always hold grieves.  
 Why is it that people always hold back?  
 Try to forget it by building up money stacks.  
 Haven't they heard forgive and forget?  
 Trust me, it will take away a lot of debt,  
 See, I had to learn this the hard way  
 Asking for my forgiveness Monday through Sunday  
 Now his doors are closed for me.  
 All because I was trying to be all I can be  
 In good, but more for the worse  
 Now the friendship we could've had burst  
 For my mistake to take his apology  
 To make it worse, I see him every day in biology  
 I guess we'll remain enemies forever  
 It went on for too long... people say "One day, I say "Never"  
 Why I don't know. I guess it's the history  
 Will we ever reunite? I don't know, that's a mystery  
 I just wanted to let y'all know  
 It ain't always about dough  
 'Cause, see, two homies riding together  
 Always makes life that much better

**-Lefty, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat: If we understand this correctly, Lefty, you refused to accept someone's apology, and as a result, you see no way to mend a fractured relationship. Is that it? If so, we can only say that "forever" and "never" are things we just can't know. What seems like forever may not be. Change is the one certainty in life, so don't count it out. You're right, though, it is difficult both to forgive and to accept forgiveness. But you're even more right that friendship makes life that much easier to maneuver. So, if there's a way, you may want to make that extra effort.**

## Forgive Your Enemies

When God made us he made us with a choice  
 to do the right thing,  
 and make the right choice.  
 Now think how God feels at how we kill and rob,  
 doing all this with gangs and some of us in mobs.  
 Now think about God and if he doesn't forgive.  
 And think about if he gives a damn if we live.  
 Think about it  
 Now think aren't you happy for our God,  
 And are you happy?  
 He gave us another chance not to kill and rob  
 Now put yourself in his place.  
 Can't you forgive? Forgive your enemies.  
 Man, that's only God's wish.  
 It's not hard. It's not easy, but it's right.

**-Joshua, Santa Cruz**

**From The Beat: The Bible says turn the other cheek, but some think if you do that you'll appear weak, have you followed these words in your own lifetime, forgiven someone for their crime? You're the teacher tell us what you did, and maybe inspire some other kid.**

## How to Reach Me

I remember one of my previous masters had instructed me on how to clear my mind and let my body think. By the time I understood what he said, the sparring match was over and my fellow student lay defeated. All that was left to do was bow to my opponent,  
 then to my sensi, and take on my next challenger in the next lesson. I guess when I'm fighting it is a good time for me.

**-Wolverine, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat: Do you think you could use your powers of concentration and focus to avoid situations like the one that resulted in your incarceration? Your sensi would surely approve.**



## Day In, Day Out

My ways are vital  
 Something like the Bible  
 Ride to my own beat  
 Unlike most foo's I see  
 Always imitated  
 Pero nunca duplicated  
 It's in my nature  
 So I don't gotta fake it  
 Vatos claim to be down  
 I'm like, "Dang, homie, aren't we all?"  
 I seen the sickest barrios rise  
 And the weakest ones fall  
 In the calles I roam  
 Ain't no mercy shown  
 Cuetasos to your dome  
 Will make a cemetery your home  
 My crazy life ain't nothing nice  
 Nobody makes it out without a price

**-Grumpy, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We can't tell if you're celebrating that crazy life where nothing is nice, or lamenting it. When you get out, do you plan to go back to doing what got you here, or will there be some major changes? Your future (and your freedom) depend on the answer to that question.

## Hate

When I lose someone close to me, it feels like an atomic bomb has erupted in my heart. Now, mourning over a loss is just the kick-start to revenge. No, revenge does not take away your loss, but it's a damn good substitute, a damn good one.

Who taught me about revenge is irrelevant, but I got my ways to busting power moves, ya dig. I learned about revenge when my big bra was killed and I've been full of hate ever since. Hanging on to hate doesn't do nothing but mold you into what you feel, and that's hate. A ninja full of hate ain't nothing but a beast. Me, I'm a goon and I'm FED UP with this shhh. So I'ma go beast till I'm put down six feet.

**-Fed-Up Gloss, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** The honesty you bring to what you write gives it a power beyond just your words. We wish we could wave a magic wand to take away some of that hate, fueled by pain, that you're carrying around, but there is no such magic. What is the shhh you're so fed up with? Is it the system that keeps you a prisoner, a modern-day slave? Or is it your own choices that lead you to this situation? Being six-feet under will take away your pain, but at what cost to others who love you? And death may not be the worst of it... How you die and how long it takes can be worse than that final rest.

## Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness

To tell you the truth, losing someone that you love or know hurts like hell! I can't really explain the feeling, but it's just a feeling that you would wish you never felt before! It's sad to lose a loved one, especially if that person whom you love died of a murder. Then you feel the need of revenge against that person!

Revenge... Man, feeling the need of revenge ain't cool at all because you be mad and just ready to bust somebody' melon off! But you could handle the situation differently. It ain't easy to forgive someone, but eventually you will in the long run.  
 I'm out!

**-Lil' Nicoya, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** We know through our own experience that forgiveness is very hard to accomplish. But by that same experience, we also know that when it happens, it's like a great weight lifted off one's shoulders. Thank you for expressing, as best you can, how much it hurts to lose someone you love. Sometimes, words are just not up to the task of expressing what our emotions make us feel. And thank you for the advice about time easing the pain, and the desire to get even.

## Kyle's Vampire Story - Prologue

The year is 2008 and I'm writing this while hiding from human civilization because my species is what they call vampires. Yes, we drink blood, but very rarely do we accidentally kill human partners while doing it. We do have better-than-human senses, agility and strength. We live in wilderness areas outside of the more populated areas. We live in big houses so that we can live with our human partners.

My clan's name is Kint. The human partners and vampires are part of it. The clan's town is made up of 20 adult female vampires, 10 adult male vampires, 20 juvenile male vampires, 40 juvenile female vampires, 360 adult male humans, 360 adult female humans, 540 juvenile female humans and 540 juvenile male humans. The total amount of people is 3070.

In my house there is my father; his two wives, one of which is my birthmother; my two sisters; their human partners. That's 48 human adults in the house. Half are male, and half are female. There are 72 kids. So just in my family house there are 125 people!

Ok. So, I'm the youngest vampire in my family. I'm 60 years old, and we vampires live to be 700 years old. My sisters are 65 and 70, which is pretty closely stacked together.

Oh, I almost forgot, my name is Lark. My dad's name is Shark, and my sisters are CC and Rica. My mom's are Julia and Daana. My human partners are all female. Their names are JJ, Laura, Chelsea, Rita, Jessica, Robin, Christina and Michelle.

I'm an experiment. I'm the only vampire who can go out during the day. Although I do get bad sunburn, it helps to wear and I love sunglasses. Other vampires can't even stay awake during the day, but I can.

Our religion is Wicca, which is witchcraft. We are the ones who started it. Not I per say, but vampires did. However, I don't get to practice or even read witchcraft books, let alone do spell.

**-Kyle, Alameda**

**From the Beat:** We've got the background set and now we're ready for Chapter One. A few questions: Are you on the side of Good or Evil? Do you have any connection with Dracula? Is it true about the garlic? And what about silver bullets? Keep this story flowing!

## How I Feel

It seems like I always take a loss  
 That's what happens when ninjas hatin' when you shine  
 like a New Gloss

Listen to me, it ain't good to take a loss  
 'Specially when you at home living like a boss  
 I keep my ears to the streets and keep my mouth closed,  
 Stay on my toes, under pressure I done watched how  
 y'all froze

Man that's the life y'all chose  
 People talk this and that, about how they did this and that,  
 But don't know that revenge comes right back  
 Me, I just learned how to react, sit back and watch my  
 chips stack  
 I know I don't did a lot in my short life and I can't take  
 nothin' back

I'm just relentless,  
 But every night I ask God for forgiveness

**-Full Of Envy Bud, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** There are two lines in this tight poem that caught our eye. The first is that you're sitting back watching your chips stack. We don't know how you're making those chips, but what are you risking? Are the lessons you've learned worth more or less than those chips? The second is your asking God for forgiveness. What actions do you believe have to accompany your prayers to be forgiven? In other words, what is God praying to you?

### Who am I?

Who am I?  
 Does anybody know,  
 because I don't know.  
 I'm me every day but who am I?  
 I wake up every morning, see the same face and hear the same voice.  
 But I don't know who I am.  
 Is it because all of the stress is pulling me away from who I am?  
 Or is it all of the problems?  
 Maybe I'm just another person in this world of hate and violence.  
 Or maybe I'm just not trying hard enough to find me.  
 Or am I just a rolling ball of bad memories, trying to find a hole of fire to roll into.  
 I just don't know. So can anybody tell me who I am?

**-Keenan , Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Perhaps you are all of the above and a whole lot more. You might be a writer, for instance. We bet you are a good friend, to someone, maybe to more than 'someone'. You are probably a loving son. You're no doubt a curious fellow. Yes, we're sure of it - you are more than you can possibly now know. We're quite sure you'll get to know yourself better, as the years roll on.

### Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness

What's up Beat? How all you doing out there? This week I wanted to share this with those who think life is bad. Could you imagine not having your mom by your side all the time in childhood but yet knowing she's still alive? Well that's me, and a lot of people out there.

I lost my mom when I was less than a year old but I didn't let that hold me back. Most people asked if I wanted revenge for her leaving me, I said no 'cause I know she loved me just like I loved her and then I got the chance to meet her at the age of 15, I am now 16 and all I could do was forgive her for not being there.

**-Harry Potter, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You're absolutely right. All you can do is forgive her for not being there, and move on and try to strengthen your relationship with her. You can't make up for the lost time, but just put it behind and start a new bright future. You're a smart, stop wasting your time coming here.

### Pain Went Through My Heart

Pain went thru my heart when I lost one of my close homies  
 I sit here and ask myself, why couldn't that bullet be for me? Maybe it just wasn't time for me to leave,  
 But I have to smoke some blunts of weed  
 In order for that stress and pain to leave.  
 One day I'll meet him again but for now in my heart  
 I keep my very close loving dead friend.  
 I remember it like it was yesterday  
 I'ma be a father and husband, and my homie would say  
 But little did he know that death for him was only a few days away.  
 He took two to the head  
 And at the scene unfortunately he was pronounced dead.  
 A couple of weeks later a funeral he had  
 Of course I was there for the homie that was always there for me And my back he had.  
 Losing him was very sad,  
 I felt a lot of pain and because he was very close to me  
 ...it made and makes me feel mad and bad.

**-Mac, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We're so sorry you lost your friend. But with these words you bring him back to life for a minute: We feel both the loss and the love you had for him. Thanks for sharing this powerful piece with The Beat!

### Mis Dos Amigos

Me acuerdo la vez que sali de Honduras. Sali con unos amigos y en el camino despues de estar acompañado 12 días, quede solo por unos cuantos días. Al siguiente día, me enferme y no pude caminar más. Espere a que me encontrara una muchacho que viviera en mi mismo barrio. Encontré a uno pero no lo conocía. El fue el quien me ayudo para seguie adelante.

Gracias a Dios y a él, estoy aqui. Los dos son mis grandes amigos y se los agradezco toda mi vida. Por el estoy vivo y tengo lo que tengo. Hemos trabajado por ser algo.

**From The Beat:** Ese si fue una gran persona. Le debes la vida a esa persona. Esperamos que algún día cuando veas a un necesitado, lo ayudes como te ayudaron a ti. La vida y tu Dios te han dado otra oportunidad que hagas de tu vida algo bueno. Recuerda que a tite dieron vida, no para que quites vidas con lo que vendes.

### My Best Two Friends

I remember the time I left Honduras. I left with two friends. After being with them for 12 days, we separated and I spent a few days alone. The next days after those days, I got sick and I couldn't walk anymore. I waited for someone from the same 'hood to find me, but I didn't find one. I meet another, but I didn't know him. He was the one who helped me to continue with my journey.

Thank to God and him I'm here. They are my best friends and I thank them with all my life. Because of his help, I'm alive and I have what I have. We have worked to be someone.

**-Luis, San Francisco**

**From The Beat:** He is a good person. You owe him your life. We hope you some day do return the favor to anyone who'll be in need, and help them the same way you were helped. Life and God has given you another opportunity to make something good out of your life. Remember that you were helped to keep your life, not to take life away by selling what you sell.

### When Did It Start?

When did it start? It all started in temple when I was 13. I used to go to temple every Sunday to pray to Buddha. On this certain week there was this new guy that started going. My cousin introduced me to him.

We got to know each other and I found out he was a gangbanger. It wasn't like I wanted to be one. But we started hanging out outside of temple. I still remember the first time we hung out. He called me and said "I'ma come over with some of my friends to hang out."

I said "OK, let's meet halfway"

Me and my brother end up riding bikes to meet him halfway. When we finally met up with him I was dazed... to me they really looked older but really they were the same age as me. They had bandanas hanging from their left pockets, and they were eight deep. I was introduced to all of them. We ended up going to the movies too. Later that day I called my Dad and told him that I was spending a night at a friend's house with my brother.

We ended up staying out the whole night throwing rocks at windows, and cruising the streets on bikes. I got to know them and started hanging out with them a lot. I got introduced to weed, cigarettes, alcohol, sex, and much more.

I hope it started off differently.

**-Insane Viet, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You can't control how your story started, because that was all in the past. But you can control how it ends, you can control what you do with it. You can control whether you go back to that lifestyle once you get out. What do you think, Insane Viet. Is it time to let some sanity back in?

## Fear

Sometimes I fear to walk the block with my homies.  
Never know when I'ma come across a rival that might know me.

I struggle and strive to keep my sanity, hustle on and off the block to provide for my family.

I fear 'cause I never know when I'ma get hit, scared, spooked like a PC'd up prisoner known as a snitch. I guess you could say I fear of change, never seeing myself graduate or do good. All I ever know is my rag hangin' out, my pocket always standin' solid to the hood.

Never been a punk, but I get fear in my lungs when it's time to dump.

All it takes is one buck to hit the pen. I'd volunteer myself in a war that we ain't guaranteed to win.

I have fear to lose my life. When I'm thinkin' of change, I always think twice. I don't know why. Do you know why?

I stay solid to my culture, my people and my pride. For those who had no fear ended up losing their lives. All the hatred, mistreatment--that's something that just can't pass by.

Another great big fear in my life is losing my mother. Always kept it real, stood solid like no other. What can I say? I love her.

She's my pride and joy.

Everyone in my family knows me as her Mijo, her little boy.

As you can see on the left side of my neck, I got her name.

I guess you can say my ultimate fear is seeing her watch me lose my life to the gang.

I also fear to grow up livin' life by myself. I need a wifey at that:

Someone to always stand by my side.

Someone to always have my back.

Someone with pretty hair and a pretty smile.

Someone to settle me down even though it might take a while.

I fear not to love or have no one to love me.

I want a wife, kids, people who are close to me.

A happy successful life, something life's supposed to be.

**-Lil' Mousie, Alameda**

**From The Beat: Mousie, this time we're not even going to try to flow back at you. You've said everything there is to say in this piece. The life you've caught up in, the love you feel inside, your hopes and dreams for the future. You already know what it will take to honor the love you feel for your mom, and you know, we hope that the boy she loves and the man she expects you to be are the REAL you. Are you going to get past all the BS and find your way to him?**

## Facing Your Troubles At Home

There were times I was outside and I didn't want to go home to deal with the drama. So instead of dealing with it, I just ran away from it, hoping that it was forgot about. So I went home the next day, finding out that it only made the trouble worse.

So pretty much what I'm trying to say is if you know you're in trouble, go home and deal with it instead of waiting three or more days later, because it could be two times worse then it already is

**-Clay, San Francisco**

**From The Beat: This is some excellent advice. It's not the easiest advice to follow (as you know), but facing things squarely instead of running from them is one sign of maturity. Children run from their problems. Responsible adults don't.**

## Anger

Anger is somthin' that loves to come to me.  
Anger is dangerous, vicious - something it's known to be.

But it's all a mind statement.

It's about how you handle it.

Half the world is filled with anger and that's no doubt.

It's got me circlin' the block lookin' for rivals  
just to get my anger out.

To me anger is uncontrollable. It gets my body all tight in knots.

I always act on how I'm feeling whether I think about my options or not.

Most people get mad because of the way they live their life,  
Just flashin' on people taking flight without thinking twice.

People know money goes round and round,  
But every direction they go, it ain't been found.

So they get mad and they let anger get to them.

So they load that extra clip, carrying that heavy metal on their hip.

Either way you choose to grind, Lil' Bra,  
the government walks away with the most clips.

Anger gets to you so quick, you can't do you.

Anger knows where it wants to be so it does what it choose.

It's up to you: Think about the war.

So many people lost their kids and wives.

They put in work for their country, ended up losing their lives.

Man, don't that get you heated inside.

They were men puttin' it down with so much pride.

Think about the people in the pen.

They once were on the street, slippin' and slidin' and grindin'.

Now they in the pen 'cause anger made them make mistakes.

Now they do hard time with hella different fools eatin' off their plate.

Now anger got you filled with pain, sorrow and mostly hate.

And that's something, Lil Bra, I ain't going to take.

**-Lil' Mousie, Alameda**

**From The Beat: Now that you see behind the scenes, can you beat it? The food they're offering you is poisoned, you still gonna eat it? The system is hungry, you gonna feed it? Or can you step up, look at your old life, man up and delete it.**

## Loss...

What's up Beat? This is Lil' Bj writing about loss and revenge.

I lost a sister and a lot of friends and I have to say it is not cool.

The pain people go through when they lose a love one. Sometimes they need revenge so they can feel the same pain you feel

or sometimes they be so mad that they don't think before they do it.

Maybe sometimes you just don't care anymore now you're ready to do anything.

It's a shame when you with someone one day, and the next day or month they're gone. Rest in Peace: Doobie, Stevie, Rob-bin, Jae, Grashanda.

**-Lil' Bj, Alameda**

**From The Beat: Losing a loved one, whether it be to violence on the streets or to whatever cause maybe is very difficult to deal with. It's part of life but it shouldn't have to be that way. And you're right sometimes we might not care and start acting without thinking. But we need to catch ourselves and value our lives a lot more. Our folks pass away and we need to be strong and hold it down for them in this life. Rest in Peace to everyone that has passed. We can't use the loss of a loved one as an excuse to sabotage our own lives.**

## 100%

Y'all ain't 100%  
 When I was out with y'all  
 Y'all was 100%  
 When I had funk  
 Y'all was 100%  
 When I needed some money  
 Y'all was 100%  
 When I go to jail  
 Y'all aint 100%  
 When I need mail  
 Y'all ain't 100%  
 When I said put money on the phone  
 Y'all ain't 100%  
 When I said send pictures  
 Y'all ain't 100%  
 But if y'all was me  
 I'd be 100%  
 Now all I see  
 Who was 100%  
 Y'all still my dogs  
 But y'all ain't 100%

**-Herzog, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** The only ones that can be 100% is your family that loves you and cares about you no matter what. And the only other person you can depend is yourself. You need to not get into any trouble. So you won't have to depend on anyone. Only you can look out for you and nobody else.

*I hope I get out tomorrow when I go to court, 'cause I'm sick and tired of this food, I'm sick and tired of this fake water and soap, and I'm sick and tired of these four walls.*

## Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired

I am soooo ready to go home. I'm sick and tired of being here!

Y'all don't understand how bad I want some Popeye's! Sometimes I think I should be a spokesperson for them, considering how many chicken strips I've purchased and BBQ sauce I've bought. Two bbq's and one ranch and one honey for my biscuit, unless I get two or three with my Raspberry Iced Tea.

Anyways I miss my baby (my lil' sister) Niyah, but I call her Crafiyah 'cause when she was a baby she use to always cry. She still does, a big 'ole baby and she's five and a half.

I'm tired of being here. I could be doing cool things right now. I really need a 'port and I don't even smoke! That show you how stressed to the game I am!

I miss my queen size bed! It's really a full size but right now it would feel like a queen size bed.

I hope I get out tomorrow when I go to court, 'cause I'm sick and tired of this food, I'm sick and tired of this fake water and soap, and I'm sick and tired of these four walls.

**-Don' Janae, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** We hope you get out too, but we also hope that you don't end up back in jail. Clearly, you can't stand it in here, but is that enough of a motivation to keep you from doing anything illegal when you are on the outs? We hope so.

## Alabama

I knew this guy they called Alabama. He's an older guy about forty. He was always hanging in front near my house. He was a drug addict and sold drugs too.

I went outside and talked to him for a while. I never went to school so I would be outside hiding from the police and, selling drugs. He told me he was going in for life because he killed someone. I was laughing, but he was serious. He told me it was because someone touched his daughter. Me and him were selling and he showed me all the good spots to go because he knew people.

He went with me to sign up for school and always told me I should try to do something. He asked me if he should go to court and fight the case on his court date or stay out til they get him. I didn't know what to say.

It was fun sometimes hanging out with him but other times were bad. Lots of fights he was in because of other drug addicts. But it all came to an end when we were in an abandoned house downtown. I guess the police raided it the day before. A guy tried to stab him because he wouldn't let him in to smoke. And another guy that he was with told them to fight one on one and when they were fighting the cops came and surrounded the whole house. I ran through the back of the house with some other guy and got away. I turned around behind the bushes and seen blood on him with handcuffs on. Ever since that day I always appreciate life and, when I get out of here, I'm going to stay out.

**-Trey, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** We do hope this near fatal incident is your wake up call. There is nothing glamorous about the life that Alabama led. What is your plan to staying out of jail?

## It's Ridiculous

I did a burglary when I was fifteen. I did my time and passed my programs. Then out of nowhere my mom leaves the country. The punk judge fails me from community service because my mom was no longer my guardian.

It's ridiculous how I get sent to Ohio to live with my Dad. It's ridiculous how while I was in Ohio, they had court out here giving me a bench warrant.

It's ridiculous out in Ohio, so I took a Greyhound back to California. It's ridiculous how I got set up after 7 months of living on my own.

It's the most ridiculous how they want to send me to Y-A alternative for 12 months for not doing shhh! All these punks wanna test me because I'm the only white boy down for my kind. But it's only shhh talkers behind my back. These unprofessional system people funk in' with us like they're hard. So condescending, patronizing. I'm the youngest thirty year old you'll ever meet. And the reality of the matter is I'd be off probation right now if my mom was here, and if I did get in trouble, I'd be back on house arrest. Instead they say they might send me to Nevada. Damn this shhh is too ridiculous.

**-D, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** Sounds messy. So your mom bolts, the system then sends you to Ohio, and then has a court proceeding out here in California while you're in Ohio and then issues a bench warrant? How did you find out about this? Did they contact your dad? And what did your dad do when you came back to California? Did he report to your probation officer or notify the courts? Sounds to us like right now what's best for you is to get thru your program, and get out of the system. Not sure how old you are, but you might want to look into getting emancipated, so you can live on your own, without further problems. Take responsibility, don't get careless, the system will beat you at that game!

## My Loss

Damn! I'm going to talk about two people. Well, the first one is my grandpa. My family lost him in 1998 a few days after Christmas. It was a lost cause. I was very close to him and he treated me like I was his hija, that's how close we were.

Now, that I'm a little older, I feel a big emptiness inside me and I had make a big promise that I was going to get a tat and its been a month already that I've had it and all I have to say is that I love him and R.I.P. Jose Avila, 12-28-98.

The second person that I lost is my unborn child. It was a few months ago. I was about 3 and a 1/2 to 4 months pregnant. That loss was very painful and stressful because it was going to be a very good thing in my life. I was really happy to bring this baby in this world. So those are the things I have lost in my life, so thanks for having a min to read this. To all in here keep your heads up.

**-Kelia, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat: We all take losses and like the sun rise and fall everyday - so do we. It's all about your understanding and drive to continue on that gives you real closer from that what has been lost to you. Nothing lasts forever unfortunately.**



## Becoming A Man....

Its not always easy becoming a man, you can always say you're a man 'cause it's much easier said than done. A man isn't someone who runs from responsibility, a man isn't someone who's not able to be depended on, a man isn't someone who has no job, who depends on the next person to provide their needs, well I've broken down the steps of what's isn't a man now let me explain to you in my eyes what's a man.

To me a man is someone who's always owning up and taking responsibility for his actions, a man is someone who provides, not get provided for, a man is someone who works hard for a living, a man is someone who depends on no one but himself, a man is someone who listens more than he talks because he knows he doesn't know everything. He can always be taught something, and last but not least, a man never cries when he's corrected, when he knows he's in the wrong, he just takes it and rolls. In my eyes this is what it's about.

**-Lil' New Orleans, Alameda**

**From The Beat: You have a good head on your shoulders. You're right about everything you said we couldn't have said it better ourselves. Being a man is accepting the consequences for your actions, and taking responsibility. You are a very special person because you're so young and yet you have all this knowledge. Most people go through their whole lives not knowing what a real man is or at least what the characteristics are to define what a man is. And you have hit the head on the nail with a hammer and we hope you don't let your brilliant mind go to waste. Educate your peers!**

## La Señora De Mexico

Esto me pasó en México. Cuando venía en el camino desde Honduras, una señora sin conocerme me dejo vivir unos meses en su casa. Gracias a Dios, por ella no sufrí. Me daba comida y gracias a ella me consiguió trabajo. Asi pude ganar un poco de dinero para seguir adelante hacia acá.

Logré llegar a los Estados Unidos, y ahora gracias a Dios estoy donde estoy. Voya ala casa de mi abuela, a quien le cuento mis problemas. Ella es la quien me aconseja y me dice que busque a Dios que haga lo bueno y que tenga fe en Dios porque El es lo mejor en esta vida.

Se siente sofocado y triste y como que hace falta algo en nuestro corazones cuando uno toma venganza en alguien.

Se siente furioso cuando le han hecho algo y lo maltratan a uno. Ese odio adentro y tienes ganas de quitarle la vida a alguien.

**From The Beat: Que bien que hayan gente asi con un gran corazón. Acuerdate de esa persona quien te tendio la mano. Nunca olvides lo que ella hizo por ti. Acuerdate siempre de esa ayuda porque seria una pena que olvidara lo que ella hizo por ti. A lo mejor no tienes idea de lo que ella hizo por ayudarte. Dale a tu abuela la atención que ella se merece. "A veces uno no sabe lo que tiene hasta que lo pierdes," siempre recuerda este dicho.**

## The Lady From Mexico

This happened to me in Mexico. When I was coming from Honduras, a lady who didn't know me let me live in her house for a few months. Thank God because of her I didn't suffer. She would feed me and thank to her I found a job. That how I gained some money to continue with my journey.

I made it to the US, and thanks to God I'm here. I'm going to live at my grandmother's house. She is the one who I share my problems with. She's the one who advise me to do good things, and tells me to have faith in God because He is the best in this life.

It feels suffocated, very sad, and an emptiness in our heart when you take revenge against someone.

It make you feel furious when someone has done something to someone you care and when they mistreated you. That hate stores inside and you feel like taking a life way.

**-Francisco, San Francisco**

**From The Beat: It's to know that there are people who have a big heart. Don't about that person who extended her hands to help you. Don't forget what she did for you. Always remember that help because it would be unfair if you forget her effort. You may not have an idea of what she must have gone through to help you. Give your grandmother the attention she deserves. "Sometimes you don't know what you got until you loose it." Always remember that saying.**

## Rather Be Stoned

The days I don't wanna go home  
 Are the days I wanna get stoned  
 Just sittin' smoking and jokin'  
 The grapes is what I be tokin'  
 So high in the sky I don't know why  
 But all this bullshhh brings a tear to my mom's eye  
 To see her cry makes me feel bad  
 She did the same with my dad  
 He was never there when I was young  
 But now those days are all done  
 So why can't I be good and choose the right path  
 It's hard to do but one day I hope my wish comes true.

**-Sg, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat: Your wish can come true! It is so on you. You make the choice to better your life and joy will come over your mom and we bet even you!**

*Police say a man on the street stepped in front of my grandfather's car, and when my grandfather stopped his car, the man walked up to the side of his car and shot him in the head.*

### The Day I Lost My Grandfather

The day I lost my grandpa was a very hard time. He died three years ago yesterday. Police say a man on the street stepped in front of my grandfather's car, and when my grandfather stopped his car, the man walked up to the side of his car and shot him in the head. The police say he then threw my grandpa out of the car and took his money and drove3 off in my grandpa's car.

This lady that was a witness went over to my grandpa's side and called the police. When the police identified my grandpa, they called our house and told us that had happened. My whole family broke down for weeks. They eventually found my grandpa's car, but they didn't find my grandfather's killer. But they did have a picture of his murderer, and I look a good look at it, and swore to myself I would avenge his death.

I will try and find my grandfather's murderer, and ever since, I wanted to get revenge. But I've never found him, and that was that.

Well, that's all I got to say for today's piece.

**-Niko, Santa Clara**

**From The Beat:** This is a very sad but well-written description of a tragedy that should never have happened. We are so sorry that you experienced this loss, and especially in the way your grandfather died. Too many people only think of themselves — their wants, their needs, their desires — and never about what they do to the people left behind. Even though what this man did is a terrible and unforgivable crime, we're glad you never found him, because if you took your own revenge, there's a good chance that your family would also have to deal with losing you to the system. Your responsibility now is to live a long life so that you can carry your grandpa's memory for many years to come.

### The Game

In the cuts in the  
 Street, drug dealers, gangsters  
 Pimp, players, and hustlers.

Being a savage trying  
 To survive with out  
 Knowing they are the  
 Killers. Without good  
 Guidelines they can not  
 Learn to move forward.  
 Hustling, stealing chips,  
 And killing will not set  
 You free.

Many are falling into this game because of the  
 temptation for money, power,  
 or respect. Many claim

a gang or crew, in order to gain it faster. Not  
 knowing the fast lane is  
 a horrifying disaster.

In order to move on  
 You have to sit down and think  
 Willing hoping if you got it  
 Within. Knowing you need to

Stop, after a while you fall in your spot.

**-Blaze, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** "After a while you fall in your spot". You said it. ... you drop real wisdom in this poem... are these things you've witnessed or gone through yourself?

### The Life I Lived

Do you really understand the life that I live?

Where a ninja fast to take but so slow to give  
 Mama working overtime but no food in the fridge

This is the life I've lived

Pops not around moms doing it on her own  
 Doing everything she can to keep her kids at home  
 But you love her cause she tries even though she all  
 alone

This is the life I've lived

With dad not around it was like he didn't care  
 No money in our pockets and food was barely there  
 When he did come around it was nothing but a stare

This is the life I lived

Gave my life to the streets and started to sell drugs  
 Started getting older and we all became thugs  
 I couldn't leave the streets that's where I felt loved

This is the life lived

My family got better but I became worse  
 Only coming home to put money in moms purse  
 Out committing crimes while others are at church

This is not the life to live.

**-Jake, Alameda**

**From The Beat:** You said it yourself this is not the life to live. That lifestyle is only gonna guarantee you a couple things for sure, and that's jail time, and taking more losses. We don't want you to lose your life to this game cause in reality it's not a game. There are other things you can do for money and legit ways to hustle to make some do. But don't risk your freedom or your life for some dirty money.



### I Could've Helped Out

The days I didn't want to go home  
Was when I was mobbin' in the streets,  
Nickel and dimin', puttin' jewels around my wrist,  
And fresh kicks on my feet.

But where I messed up  
Was not makin' sure the household had something to eat.  
Even though mama had three jobs, I could've helped out.  
At least gave her a call instead of her being left out.  
And because of that, those were the days I didn't want to  
go home.

**-Lil' Dee**

**From The Beat:** The thing is, your family doesn't just need the money you bring in, your family needs you out of jail and being successful in life so that you can eventually get out of the ghetto and into a better life.

### Revenge Does Make Me Feel Better

To me revenge does make me feel better.

Well, it doesn't actually make me feel better, but it does relieve a bit of stress. So I think you can take revenge a lot of ways. Yea, most likely it's gonna be wrong, but nowadays a lot of people make wrong decisions.

Well honestly, if someone did something to me or my family, I wouldn't feel right if I wouldn't react to it. I wouldn't be able to hold through knowing the person that did something to my family is walking the street, having their fun—and I did nothing.

**-Dj**

**From The Beat:** Was there a time in life where revenge took some of your pain away? Or was there anyone you ever lost in your life because someone else was seeking revenge? Do you believe that there is also a place for forgiveness?

### Falsely Accused

Yo, "Judge"

Excuse me, judge  
This is a bunch of bull  
I don't know this witness  
And every day I stay in school  
Backpack on my shoulders  
And books in my hand  
3.8 GPA

Just look at me, man  
I stay to myself  
And don't worry 'bout nobody else  
Plus, I got check stubs  
Just to prove I got legal wealth  
And if anybody has been  
Falsely accused  
It's me. . .  
four-walls entertainment  
Free the "CEO" (me)

**-T-Rex**

**From The Beat:** We don't know the details of your case, but we do know it's time to add an open door to those four walls, so you can get back to rhyming for real - plus that 3.8 could have you UC-Berkeley bound. Have you thought about your future? Where do you plan to end up?

*Ever since we moved out I spend more time with my family. I'm not mad because I moved out of the hood.*

### The Most Hurtful Pain

Losing someone close to you is the most hurtful pain you could ever feel. I have lost people who were very close to me and the only thing that ran through my head afterwards was revenge.

It's hard to forgive in some cases, and in others I sometimes do forgive the person if it's nothing serious. But with the person that shot me, revenge is all I think when I think about him. So I know I don't forgive him, and I don't think I will any time soon.

**-Teddy**

**From The Beat:** We hope you don't get caught up in a desire for revenge, because the best revenge you could ever have would be to end up having a successful life. Leave the haters behind! And the hate!

### Problems With My Parents

The times when I don't want to go home are when I'm having problems with my parents. Like when I'm out having fun and I don't want to go home. But if I don't, I will have to hear my mom's mouth, or she won't say anything. She will just call my pa.

So when I don't come home depends on how my mom feels: If she don't feel like yelling at me for not coming home, or she won't say anything, that means she already called my pa.

**-Nasty Boy Rick**

**From The Beat:** Why do you think your parents get mad at you for not going home? Does seeing so many young people without parents to worry about them change how you feel at all? Do you feel lucky to have both a mother and a father, both of them worrying about your safety?

### The Day I Get Out

When I get out, I'm gonna stay out.

I don't want to come back to the Hall because it be hella boring. We be stuck in our rooms doing shhh. When I get out I'ma be with my family all the time. I'ma go with the homies, but only once in a while, 'cause I live kind of far from the hood. Ever since I moved out from the hood my life has changed.

Where I live now is not the same as Oakland. There is not a lot of violence, and you never hear of somebody getting killed. Ever since we moved out I spend more time with my family. I'm not mad because I moved out of the hood.

**-A new me**

**From The Beat:** Do you feel like moving out of the hood has made it easier for you to stay out of trouble? What happened this time to bring you to The Hall? What kind of difference does it make in your mindset, having less violence and killings around you?

### Still In Bondage

I'm just another  
Black man bonded in spiritual chains  
Been to hell and back in this life  
And nothin' ever seems to change  
My whole life has been hell  
And it don't get no betta  
I did the block thang  
I did the glock thang  
Did the drug thang  
And it seems everything  
I thought would set me free  
Just keeps me in bondage  
So it ain't worth it

**-Jamil**

**From The Beat:** Once you take a hard honest look at "the life" none of it seems worth it. You did the block thang, the clock thang, and now the someone-else's-clock thing. It's time to seize control of your own life. But how will you do it?

## Secret Admirer

It's this boy I know, who's so sweet.  
 I'm really feeling his lovely eyes and his sexy smile.  
 His tone is divine, the way he walks, and talks,  
 the boy is not just cute but he's fine.  
 I wonder if we were making love  
 would his touch send shivers down my spine?  
 Have I found him, the one that's truly mine?  
 I want to grow old with him -me as your woman,  
 you as my man- maybe were moving to fast...  
 lets start as friends,  
 'cause I wouldn't want this good thing to end.  
 We got to rise above all high tides baby  
 don't trip we go be set for life.  
 Inspired by my ex or maybe boo D.

-Bg

**From The Beat:** We are intrigued by the end of your poem—you describe the sweetness of love, but not the hardship, and yet you dedicate the poem to your ex? Why is he your ex? What are the challenges of being with someone, even if they are so sweet?

## Forget Friends

I'm getting tired of ninjas keep saying I snitched. I don't give a damn what ninjas saying. None of them ninjas won't do nothing, especially my co partner. Other than that I'm not gone let none of them get in my head.

When I get out I'm just gone watch who I kick it with. I can't surround myself with the same people because everyone I used to kick it with aint the type of people I wanna be with. They always doing some thing stupid like robbing people. But I'm try to get my GED so when I get out I'm gonna go to college and try to get a good job.

My whole life is going to change because I rather be out with my family instead of being locked up. I'm gonna go support my family when I get out. I been in here for so long that I realize that you don't need friends. The only people you really need in your life is your family because they are gone be with you though the good and the bad times. So like I always say forget friends, family first.

-Lil' KeV

**From The Beat:** We hope that you really mean it when you say you're gonna change your whole life around. It's not gonna be easy but we're confident you can do it. You just need to believe in yourself. Go help out your family, because it's true they're the only ones that's gonna be there for you through thick and thin.

## Lost Ones

I wish I could see you. God knows I miss you. Just to see your face, hopefully erased all the things left undone. I miss you lost one.

I remember the times we shared, just to know you were always there. Than all of a sudden you are gone. I've been down for so long. And hurt for so long, There were times I thought I never seen the break of day. All the while I knew you would make it through. I wish things never turned out this way. I miss you so much my sweet loved one. Just to hear your voice would make me want to shout in rejoice. I would be so happy if I found that one soldier left out. My world would be complete, if only we could meet in a better place one day.

Always missing you my loved ones. RIP Baby Bryon, Tario, G.O., Mellia, Raymond, Mario, Arthor, Pourger, Son, Ernest.

-Bg

**From The Beat:** This is a heartbreaking piece. So many tragic deaths... Although you may not be able to see your loved ones again, you DO have the power to help make sure that others you love don't suffer the same fate. Do you have it in you to start promoting a message of peace and non-violence? What are your thoughts on that?

## Being In Love By Yourself

Letters and pictures to keep a smile on my face... but nothing but you could really take my pain away. I know we'll be back together when I get on the outs but I still can't help but feel like I'm in love by myself.

-Missin' My Man

**From The Beat:** Tell us more about this young man. What's he like? How do you think this time in jail will affect your relationship?

## Stupidity And Ignorance

Stupidity and ignorance is something that I refer to as H.A.T.E. Apparently some people think the things that come out of their mouth are making sense, but in reality they sounds like a bunch of "Hooplah, Hooplah" in the words of Spongebob. But really to me it stupidity and ignorance. I've heard lot of girls say some ignorant things and I'm tired of it.

-M Bossy

**From the Beat:** We can feel your frustration through these pages, but we want to know more. How do you see stupidity and ignorance manifest in the actions and words of people you know? Have you even been stupid or ignorant yourself? What is the connection between stupidity, ignorance, and hate?

## Loss

I never really lost a family member really close to me, besides my great grandparents. But even that didn't hurt me as much as this past year has.

I had a boyfriend that I wasn't in love with, but had just 'cause at the time I felt I was crushing on him. Then he hurt someone, and I kicked him to the curb, so he laid his hands on me (choking me) and then I fell deeply in love with someone else, who is so perfect and close to me. So now I'm in here for my ex-boyfriend's crime, even though I didn't commit anything. Now my love has moved, and I'm stuck in here 'til my trial. It really hurts to lose someone I just basically met two months ago.

I feel like my life and heart feels incomplete. I miss him and my family. I've been in here for three weeks and I have one more week 'til my trial for my first offense that I didn't do. Being in here isn't that bad but I'm losing my family, true love and education over something that isn't worth it.

-White Snow Bunny

**From The Beat:** Even though you probably don't feel very lucky while you sit here in jail, you are. Your ex-boyfriend could have really hurt you, even killed you. It's a very good thing that you got away from him. After being in an abusive relationship like that, perhaps you can use some alone time, to think through what YOU need to do for you.

## My Aunt's House

When I don't want to go home I go to my aunt's house.

If I get in a fight with my granny and don't want to be around her and need to cool off I go to my aunt's house. My aunt lives across the street from me so when I need to get away it is a quick escape. My aunt is always helpful when I feel troubled.

Once I got in trouble for stealing and the police came and I was scared to go home so I went to my aunt's house and she was very understanding. Yes she was mad but she never reacts like my granny. My aunt is always calm and understanding. When I'm in trouble or I don't want to go home my aunt is always there for me.

-Amber

**From The Beat:** Thanks so much for sharing this with us. Tell us more about your aunt. Why do you think she is more calm and understanding than your other relatives? What was she like when she was young?



## Off The Hook

The weekend before I had come in here I heard about some parties and they was supposed to be thick and hecka females there. The day of the party my mom said I could go so I waited until my brother got ready to leave and left with him to the party. We meet up with my friends we was going to the party with and didn't even know what party we was going to because it was two of them.

And the buses didn't run to one of them so we went to the only one we could go to and left. We got to the party and only ma cousin was on the guest list but I used my other cousin's name that didn't go and they let all of us in and it was like eight of us. The party was cool, and it kinda had a lot of females and I had a lil' bit of fun until the police came.

We left and I was scared to go home because my mom said I couldn't go and I went any way. On our way home we decided we was going to my sister's house. I went home in the morning because it was my grandma's birthday and we was going to her house fo' a lil' party.

I was scared so when I got home I got my clothes out and jump in the shower. When I got out she didn't even say nothing 'bout it the whole day and I was off the hook and I was happy.

But the next day my PO came and picked me up and took me to jail ...now I'm in here telling y'all my story.

**-Daray**

**From The Beat:** Thanks for telling us your story! It sounds like the fun wasn't quite worth the drama that came after it. Did your PO now what you'd been doing?

## Being Without Him

I love this boy with all my heart and felt it was real from the start. We've been apart for a while, but I'd never forget his sexy smile, or how he'd put together his tuggish style. He took my soul to different places, and made my heart pace at different races. I know he's the one I'd spend my life with, being in here is hard to do, because I'm able to spend my days with you. When we unite our life will be more than right, because the love we have is more than tight. Regardless of our age difference, we were meant for this...kissing, hugging and only we know what else, God I miss that feeling I felt...free us fast!

**-Taco and Bouzle**

**From The Beat:** As you know there's a lot more to a relationship than the physical aspects. Is he a good man to you? Is he supporting you to do the right thing for your own life and stay out of trouble? If the answer is yes, than we wish you both the best. If the answer is no, then this poem needs a second half. As for love letters and poems to The Beat this will be the last, 'cause it doesn't teach much to any other readers.

## Scared Of Change

It would feel so sweet to hold him, to touch him, to kiss him, to rub him.

My favorite part of the day was when night came and I lay my head on his belly. It's a comfort. It's a feeling of home. I feel more at home with him then anybody. It's a feeling I've been having since I laid my eyes on him. In the back of my mind I wonder if this feeling will ever go away. It's been a year and I feel stronger for him then ever.

I have a scared feeling that one day it will fade or he won't be there. What scares me most is that one day it will change. I don't want change but maybe chang.... Maybe!

**-Gabriel**

**From The Beat:** Change is a complicated thing—it often brings about good things, but the process is difficult and painful. What changes do you want to make, either with this young man, or with your life in general?

## Ready To Go Home

I'm about ready to go home I'm so sick and tired and tired of being sick of being here. I miss my mommy so much, I don't know how I can live without her. Being here makes my mind spin, and brings tears to my eyes at the thought of my loves ones.

**-Charnequoia**

**From The Beat:** We don't want to sound uncaring, but you are in jail after all. What actions can you take in your own life to ensure that you won't be stuck in this place again?

## Helping Hand From A Stranger

Over the summer my lil' white scrapper got towed by the police. I had to catch bus to the police station and pay money for a release form. Then back on the bus to the A&B tow yard. Waited several hours for them to bring me my car... on E! They told me I had to get some gas to hurry up and move my car. They gave me a gas can and told me to get on my way on foot to the gas station.

While I was walking out the gate a Native American man leaving at the same time offered me ride to the gas station. He took me there and brought me back in less then five minutes. I respect him for that even though he was a complete stranger. My potna Marcus was with me the whole way there and back too. So I guess I got help from my potna and a stranger.

**-Mackin' Nam**

**From The Beat:** It's coo that the Native American man gave you a ride and helped out! Did you thank him? Have you ever helped out a stranger? Help yourself and get out of the system and stay off the drugs - E!

## The Stranger My Friend

The stranger was a boy,  
seventeen and a fine young thing.

This boy had manners and knew how to treat a lady  
like a queen.

This stranger didn't seem like a stranger to me.  
It seemed like I knew him every since the first day  
I was out of pampers.

It seemed like I really knew this young man  
and he really knew me,  
so we kicked it  
exchanged numbers, and started communicating.

This stranger became real close to me,  
and we started dating.

I didn't know where this stranger was from  
so I asked and when he told me, that let me know  
that this stranger wasn't really a stranger to me.

This stranger could only be my friend.

**-Lady Alameda**

**From The Beat:** Tell us the next chapter, Lady Alameda. What happened next?

## Life Is Too Short

Hopefully this time around it's different, and I can make this one chance a change. I've been trying to break this cycle for so long and it's so hard. I've been coming to Juvenile Hall since I was a very young teen and I'm going on 18. I've spent my childhood in and out of jail. It seems like I had to grow up to finally realize that life is too short. Too short for games, for mess ups. All I want is to settle and be comfortable.

**-Maline**

**From The Beat:** Do you have any specific ideas on how you are going to make this happen? What will be your very first step towards having the comfortable life you deserve?

### Losing My Cousin

One time about several years ago I lost my favorite cousin in a shoot out after a party we went to. He got shot numerous times in the chest and died in my arms. That was really hard for me because I also went to jail that night because I couldn't handle the fact that he was gone, token away from me that fast with one blink of an eye.

There he was lying, a soul in the sky gone forever but never forgotten. I never knew who shot my cousin but some body did pay for what had happen and I will never forgive the person who did. RIP lil' Bam Bam Sept 17, 2005 gone but never forgotten.

**-Lj**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry to hear about your cousin passing away. But he's gone now and the only thing you can do to honor his name is to stay away from a negative lifestyle. Yo' cousin looking down on you and you should make him proud by staying of jails, and out of trouble.

### The Days When I Stay Away From Home

I don't like to come home when I'm at my main thang's house. Man it's hard to leave, but dam when pops come home I'm 0 to 60 out the door like zoom poof! And I'm gone for real.

**-Mackin' Nam**

**From The Beat:** You better be out the house way before pops even near the front door, cause if he catches you it's a wrap! How would you like to come home and catch your daughter with a dude?! You wouldn't like it, huh?

### Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness -Revenge-

Revenge feels good when someone has harmed you  
That means the opposite of out charmed you  
Revenge feels wrong when it's talked about all the time  
But you don't think about it when yo' enemy is dying.

Revenge is a seven, letter, word  
The actions behind it is someone getting hurt  
If you get caught you would call it a curse  
But when the sentence come things get worse.

**-Jamarco**

**From The Beat:** If the outcome of revenge is so bad why do you think people still do it? If you get revenge and get caught, if you think about that's three lives going to waste. The person killed, the person revenged so the killer got killed, and the person committing the revenge gets caught and gets life in prison. Now out of one life you got two lives dead and one in jail for life.

### Loss

Have you ever lost a family member  
You can't ever regain they 're lost forever  
It's hard to lose

So what you choose  
To pop that pill

Or cry till you have no more tears  
Have you lost a homeboy to the streets  
'Cause he was caught slipping at midnight when his  
moms wanted him asleep  
She prayed and prayed for him to be with her again  
Her baby's lost she can't maintain.

**-Big Rig**

**From The Beat:** We all make decisions that will affect our future whether it may be tomorrow, three hours later, maybe a week later. But how can you deal with the losses you take? It's up to you whether you think that popping a pill is gonna make you feel better, or bring anyone back from the dead. Cause the pain is still gone be there. You need to be strong and proceed to live life just like the person that passed away would have wanted it.

### I Remember When . . .

I remember I use to sneak out the house and go spend the night with some female or maybe even a couple you feel me. But knowing that the next day when I get home I was gone be on punishment 'cause you know how mama's be hella worried about you. But I wasn't tripping while I'm out I might as well have as much fun as possible.

**-Lj**

**From The Beat:** Damn homie you could at least call your mom and let her know you are all right. Do your thang but be careful and let your mom know you good so she won't be worried. Don't be stressing her out.

### The Days When I Don't Want To Go Home

A few weeks ago it was very hard for me to go home. I was kicked out of my house from my grandparents for disrespecting the family. It was very difficult for me emotionally. Instead I stayed at my friend's house that I've known since I was three. I was there for about two weeks.

My friend's mom knew what I was going through and understood my feelings. I didn't know when it was a good time to go back home, because I hadn't talked to them since the day I was kicked out. I was violated and brought back to the hall.

**-Solomon**

**From The Beat:** It's good that you were able to talk to your friend's mom. Have you had a chance to talk to your grandparents yet and make peace with them? Because their love for you is real.

### Let Me Be Yours

Let me be yours,  
The one who will provide for you  
The one who would die for you  
I'm gonna wipe away your tears  
Hold you near when you in fear  
Never let you go because you're my dear  
You make my heart beat fast like its in third gear  
As long as I have you I'ma be happy even if it rains and  
pours  
But I still forgot to ask you-- will you let me be yours

**-Maniac**

**From The Beat:** This is a beautiful love poem, now you have to get yourself out in the free world so you can prove you're for real to your girl!

### Fear

Worst feeling in the world it lasts longer than any other feeling in the world. It will freeze you in your tracks and mess with your instincts some times those instincts are in need to survive. Some times maybe move out of the way of a home less bullet but that fear will have you standing there. It will consume you make you feel brain dead. That's why it's the greatest sign of weakness if your enemy sees you fear them. They have taken complete control of you.

I don't feel it. They say every one fears but I just worry fear for what? That's the question I ask. The only thing I can truly fear is the fear of burying another loved one, but other than that it rarely crosses my mind. Straight up. They tell me stop trying too act. Ain't no one acting, it's real life, fear no man but God because He will judge you at them pearly gates.

**- Berg**

**From The Beat:** You're right, but fear lightweight keeps us in check. For instance, if you weren't afraid to jump off bridge would you still do it? You wouldn't cause you scared. Would you rob a bank? We're not saying you're scared to do it but you're scared of the consequences it might bring. Would you punch your teacher in the face? Come now be a little realistic you have to have fear. It's nature dog. Everyone got their fears, a real man owns up to them.

### Interview About My Stay

TBW: How long have you been here?  
 Devin: Since December 30th  
 TBW: How long do you expect to stay?  
 D: Until Thursday, It's also my birthday.  
 TBW: Happy Birthday! How old are you now? Will you have a b-day party?  
 D: Thanks. I'm turning 16 and I'll have some friends over, but not a party.  
 TBW: Very cool. Are you planning on going back to school?  
 D: Yes, I was getting good grades before I came in here.  
 TBW: Good for you. What grade are you in?  
 D: I am in 10th grade.  
 TBW: Who is waiting for you at home? Your mom? Sisters? Brothers?  
 D: My mom, step dad, older brother, and younger brother.  
 TBW: Are you the only one that's been locked up?  
 D: No. I don't want to write anything about my family.  
 TBW: Good call.

**-Devin**

**From The Beat: It was good to learn more about you in this interview, and we hope that you get out soon so you can get back to what was positive in your life!**

### The Days

The days when I don't want to go home is when I'm high with blood shot eyes, or too drunk to keep myself up and I know my mom is going to be there at the house waiting for me. I would just go out with my homeboy and kick it, or go to parties and things like that.

My mom would always worry about me because she never knew where I was therefore I would only go to places that I'm familiar with, so if something did happen, then I would know how to get back home safely.

Another reason I wouldn't go home is if I'm having family problems and I don't want to talk with anybody at my house. So then again I would turn to my homeboys again and go get drunk, or high, or both just to feel better and forget about everything. I would usually go home sometime the next day

**-Richard**

**From The Beat: Man, you too young to be drinking and smoking everyday just to try to escape reality. Your problems are still gonna be there when you sober up. That's just a temporary solution to your problems that's just gonna cause you more problems. Cause when you're drink or high you can't think straight therefore, it might make you make bad decisions. Then you land in here and you have no drugs or alcohol. But your sober and now you can find real solutions to your problems that you have to face.**

### Stranger On The Greyhound

There was one day I got into it with my mom I think we was at Reno. We went for vacation for a month and when I got there I wasn't filling it I don't know why but me and my mom just fight and it happened so fast that I left and I caught the greyhound.

I had money and when I was riding there was an old G. I didn't know him, but he was in the bus and when we got to the first stop for a break (because the trip was 8 hours I think) all of the sudden we started talking and I see he didn't have any money so I got him something.

We start talking, laughing, and I felt that the ride was less than 8 hours.

**-C-Los**

**From The Beat: Great story - what kinds of wisdom did he drop on you, what did you learn from the ride? And what were you and your mom fighting about? This could be the beginning of a movie!**

### Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness

Somebody killed my lil' girl potna Tanika. And I'm still mad at how it all went down. But she in a better place now. Her Teddy gone be with her too.

**-Mackin' Nam**

**From The Beat: We're sorry to hear about your home girl. All that senseless killing needs to stop. Why are so many young people quick to resolve their problems with violence? Do you have the guts to speak out against the violence that's plaguing your community? Speak out to us!**

### The Stranger

One day a female stranger was about to drive pass me and my car had overheated. I had a warrant and was dirty with some other stuff so I was nervous. I flagged her down and I gamed her up to give me a ride and her number.

**-Keith**

**From The Beat: Did you become friends after that? Have you ever helped a stranger out?**

### When I Don't Want To Go Home

It was this one time when I was at my girl house and we had went to the movies and had a good time. When we was done watching the movie and cup caking we went to her house and her mom was gone for a day in Las Vegas and she ask me did I want to spend a night, and I said hell yeah.

I called my dad and told him I wouldn't be coming in tonight. So when we was at her house first I took a shower and then I think you know what was next. That was the day when I didn't want to go home.

**-Magnificent**

**From The Beat: Sounds like you had fun. That's good that you called yo' pops to let him know so he wouldn't be worried about you.**

### The Days When I Didn't Want To Go Home

The day when I didn't want to go home is when the police was looking for me and they had homicide looking for me. I didn't want to go because I thought they were watching me. So I had to have people go to my house and pick up things for me after about two weeks I got set up by some people and now I'm in here.

**-Marcus**

**From The Beat: Why did you have homicide looking for you homie? Is that how you want to live your life? Wouldn't you rather be kicking back at the pad not worrying about police coming to get you?**

### Best Friend

Dear Taco

You're a rising star and I love you for that  
 You wake up my every day  
 With the thought of you  
 You are the one I need in my life  
 You've been there when you didn't need to  
 And my heart smiles  
 When you show those sexy seductive braces  
 That gleam like platinum sets  
 And Momma J is my mother for life  
 Even if we part  
 So don't forget it  
 Or me when we make it to the top  
 Love ya

**-Sydy Bo**

**From The Beat: The key part of this piece is the phrase "When we make it to the top," because making it to the top is a dream of yours that is real, and it will take all your heart and talent to get yourself there. What's the first step?**

### My Goals

When I get out I'm gonna be balling like usual, but this time I'm gone do it right, without the police being on my tip. You know cause I tried it the hot way and that didn't work so I'm gonna put my grow man on feel me? So that way I could have my own money and get my own things when I want to, you know?

And when I do that I'm gonna stack my money up till a coo amount. Then I'm gonna get me an apartment 'cause I'm gonna be 18 before I get out, and live my life with my girl. And if my little brothers or sisters want to come over they can play the 360 or the PS3. While I'm doing that I'm gonna get in college and finish. And when I get like 20 or 21 I'm gonna have a family and do my thang like that you know?

**-Magnificent**

**From The Beat:** You need to get your grown man on and get grown man job. All that illegal business is only gonna land right back in county jail and possibly the pen. And then you aint gone have no more apartment, and no PS3, or Xbox 360. We're proud to hear you say that you want to go to college but you need to do something else for money.

### I Wish

I wish I had some wings so I can fly to heaven  
 This is a hard life that I'm living  
 I miss the days when me and my family be fishing  
 I wish I had a perfect life  
 And when I'm gone have everlasting life  
 I don't see why people fight  
 They don't see that they messing up someone's life  
 It hurts they family like stabbing someone neck with a knife  
 If someone try to punk me we gone have to fight  
 The only thing I can do is pray every night  
 So I can go home to my family and live a good life.  
 One love.

**-Magnificent**

**From The Beat:** We wish you could realize that there's more to life besides getting in trouble and coming to jail. We wish that all you young people would wake up and fight for a better life. There's more you can do than just pray you have the opportunity to change your life for the better. But it's all on you.

### Straight Up!

Man I'm gone tell you straight up! The way I been raised, I go by don't get mad, just get even! I know some people think it's wrong because it's just a continuing circle of violence. Just like two wrongs don't make a right...

**-KChill**

**From The Beat:** You're saying it yourself two wrongs don't make a right. Then why do you keep buying into the circle of violence? You know that circle is gonna come right back around and you're gonna get caught up in it.

### The Stranger

It was real late at night and me and some friends were coming from the movies. It was a whole lot of people at the Bart station waiting for buses. The bus was taking a long time to load people up.

Then finally the bus started loading people. This old lady with a lot of groceries was trying to get on the bus. Me and some friends helped the old lady load her groceries on the bus. She was very grateful for what we did for her.

**-Looking out**

**From The Beat:** That was very kind of you and your friends to help the old lady out with her groceries. That's good karma. One day you will be old and maybe some youngsters will help you out. Or not even old maybe one day you might need help and somebody you don't know might just help you out.

### Loss

I remember when I lost my brother Trell. I was trying to leave and get in the car with him but he wouldn't let me. So he left and I was still outside smoking when I heard gun shots. Some ninjas shot my brother a couple of blocks away and I didn't know 'till two days later. That was a great loss. RIP Trell.

**-Trell's brother**

**From The Beat:** How are you not gonna know when your own brother gets shot for two whole days? You guys weren't close or what? Give us more insight!

### Interview With Gajet

TBW: So how much longer do you expect to be locked in here?

Gajet: Well my PO just told me on Monday that I'm supposed to get interviewed this week by a group home in Fremont.

TBW: That would be cool, no? To be that close to home?

G: Yes, it would. I stay in Hayward right now, but when I get out I might go live with my ruca in Oakland.

TBW: How'd you meet your girlfriend?

G: When I got locked up, I went straight to max and met a homegirl from Hayward in here. We started talkin' but then she got out & her older sister ended up writing me & we end up bonding like Bonnie & Clyde. Gajet & Shygirl.

TBW: That's beautiful. Don't go out like Bonnie and Clyde though. How old is she?

G: Ma ruca about to be 20. I kinda feel weird 'cause that's the oldest female I've dated. I am currently 17.

TBW: Is she your first real "ruca"? Or have you been "in love" before?

G: Na, I've only taken one female serious before in the past and I never regret being with her.

TBW: Will you be living with her in your own place or with her family?

G: She rents a room out of her uncle's house. But when I get a job I'ma ask her if she would like to get our own place and even hopefully move back to my hometown with her.

**-Gajet**

**From The Beat:** Does your girl want to be a part of the new positive life you've been dreaming about - learning to be a mechanic and use your natural genius with automobiles to make a living?

### Trying To Do Right

What's up Beat? Man this shhh is hella weak. I'm ready to go home. I hate being in here, yet I keep coming back.

It seem like I want to do right, but I can't because I'm so use to living this hood life.

**-Nm Jr.**

**From The Beat:** You have to follow your heart lil' homie. If you wanna do right you have to have the inner strength and will to do right. That hood life is only gonna keep getting you caught up. You have to realize what you wanna get out of life.

### Don't Go Home

Most times I didn't go home cause I was to drunk to drive home or I was on the run. Or I was trying to chill with a young female or I just didn't feel like being at home some nights.

**-Keith**

**From The Beat:** What was wrong with your home that you didn't want to go to it. What were you running from? Did you think you could escape reality by drinking? We aint trying to knock whatever you doing but if it's gonna be bringing you to jail, you need to stop doing what you doing, unless, you like coming here.

### The Stranger

Walking, pacing looking for my next stranger  
 And the second I meet him  
 Is the second he meet the banger.  
 Pockets on empty so I'm finna empty the chamber  
 Walking, pacing looking for my next stranger.

**-Dante**

**From The Beat: There might be a stranger looking for you too—a stranger carrying a bullet with your name on it, especially if you let yourself get trapped in negativity:**

### I'm From

I'm from the concrete jungle where the violence happens  
 Where you can hear loud noises from the cars that's slappin'  
 The cops always jackin' stuffing us in they car  
 And the dope fiends creepin' off of crack and tar  
 They be on one hard, they be lovin' that shhh  
 So they go out on mission tryin' to get them a fix  
 I'm on a mission for scratch I stay on top of the game  
 I do my thang for the block and I ain't trippin' off fame  
 Don't ask me what do I claim, most people already know  
 That's why they tell me to stop because I already go  
 You know my answer is no if you ever ask for a front  
 And all I'm doing is real not a publicity stunt  
 I kick it off like a punt so ya'll ain't close to my level  
 Although God's on my side at times I act like a devil  
 On earth we living in hell so we immune to the fire  
 And I don't even like talkin' cause sucka ninjas wear wires.

**-Gumby**

**From The Beat: You have tight flows, but you always talking about the same topics. Snitches, the block, suckas, the game, the fame. We know you got talent but why don't you show us some versatility in your flows and try to stick to a topic or at least come with something different. Challenge yourself.**

### Rules

I have to get revenge on anybody because you feel so hurt when you loose someone you love to somebody you never in your life have met. You would want to have revenge if they shot someone you love or someone who snitch on you.  
 I have to get revenge. That's the only way you could feel better because you would want them to pay the price. Because that's the way of life and all you can do is respect it because those are the rules.

**-Samuel**

**From The Beat: What rules are you talking about? Who makes these rules? And is there anyone going around making sure that nobody breaks the rules? Revenge doesn't bring back your loved ones from the dead.**

### To Keep It Real

This is your girl Melissa. I'm not feeling these topics. But this is my fourth time in the Alameda County Juvenile Hall, and my charges is for battery and assault with deadly weapon.  
 But in two years, I'll be 18 and this will be my last time. I'm going to a group home for a year. But in the mean time, I'm gonna wait for my babydaddy Ernesto to get outta jail.

**-Melissa**

**From The Beat: You talk so much, and so eloquently, about your love for your man, but what about your love for yourself, young Melissa? What are you going to do for your own life while you're waiting for your babydaddy?**

### The Days...

What's up Beat Within?  
 I just wanted to let you know  
 There was a time when I didn't go home  
 Because I was afraid of my mother like when I get in trouble at school  
 All she would say is, "your such a fool"  
 I always looked down on myself  
 Never asked my mother for help  
 But there was one day when I got help from God  
 And got closer to the squad  
 But when I was away from home I missed everything  
 I left behind my little brother my little sister but I did what I chose  
 I made my own decision I'm getting grown  
 But I always love her from the bottom of my heart  
 Even when it's dark  
 And the days I don't want to go home or I should say I didn't go home  
 I wish I never made that choice because it messed up my whole life  
 And it wasn't nothing nice  
 On the corner shootin' dice  
 Wouldn't leave 'till I made the right price  
 But it's all right I love my family  
 And I wouldn't leave this world without making them proud  
 Oh yeah one more thing  
 I love my grandmother too. Thank you Beat Within.

**-Rameal**

**From The Beat: There are days where you think that going home is not a good idea but there aint nothing like going home. No matter how much trouble you think you got yourself into you will be a lot safer when you your home at night then being out on them streets at night.**

### After A Fight

The times when I don't want to go home are usually after I get into a fight or argument with my Mom or Dad and I just bounce. When I leave I usually go over to a friends house to hang out and get my frustration and anger off.  
 I usually go back after I calm down and try to work out the problems I have with my parents. But sometimes they're not calm so I just wait for them to calm down and we usually work everything out.

**-Kramer**

**From The Beat: That's cool that you decide to leave before the problems you have with your parents erupt to some even given bigger problems. Sometimes you have to just walk away and cool off first. That's a smart idea. And that's great that your able to communicate with your parents like that. You're lucky because a lot of people don't have that great communication with their parents.**

### Missin' My Fam

Hope I can go home soon cause I'm missin' my family everybody. That's all I'm thinking of in my room. I want to kick it with my homies in front of the liquor store. I miss being with them more and more when I'm here. Cause my family means everything to me. I'd do anything so they can be with me.  
 Every night and day hopefully I can go home and give my family hugs and kisses. Love them more than anything, my friends are really close to me they're just like my family love them more than anything.

**-Memo**

**From The Beat: We can feel your pain. We see that you really love your family and your close friends. We hope that you also stop doing what you were doing that got you here in the first place. If you love your family that much, you should value your freedom more. That way you wont find yourself in these facilities writing pieces like this.**

### Not Going Home

When I don't want to go home sometimes I go to the block  
 With my trouble on my side and mouth full mess  
 Wit my ninjas on the side  
 Holding it down with them chops  
 When I don't wanna go home that's where I be on the spot  
 I might be on the run or moms stressing my mind  
 So I go out, not thinking, and do a lot of crimes  
 5-0 blurp me now I'm doing a lot of time  
 Thinking to myself I should have followed my first mind  
 Now I want to go home  
 Always asking staff can I use the phone  
 'Cause I wanna go home.

**-Lil' Guis**

**From The Beat: So when you don't go home is when you usually get into trouble, huh? So when you're out on the street you don't want to go home, but when you're in jail you do? Why don't you try going home whenever you don't feel like going home so you can at least stay outta of trouble and jail?**

### What's Up Beat?

It's yo' boy young Monibo. I'm back again for a stolen car. They dropped my case to a misdemeanor. They caught me five miles away from Arizona. They pulled a lot of guns on us like we murdered somebody.

**-Monibo**

**From The Beat: What were you doing all the way by Arizona? If you wanna keep stealing you're only gonna come back to jail, and they're not gonna keep dropping your offenses to misdemeanors. So don't waste this opportunity.**

### The Days When I Don't Want To Go Home

When me and my dad really fight like when there's blood and after I cant go home because I am too mad. So I just go to my girl's house and stay with her just to cool off or I go to my mom's house in Pittsburg and she makes me something to eat. And when I try to go home me and my dad end up fighting again.

**-Calvin**

**From The Beat: Why are you and your dad fighting so much? Y'all can't talk it out? Why does it have to come down to fist fights?**

### The Days I Didn't Want To Go Home

The times that I didn't want to go home was when I ran away. I use to run away from home a lot. The reason I use to run away a lot is because my parents don't let me out a lot and because I be staying out so late that I say to myself, "I might as well just stay out the whole night."

Afta I stay out the whole night the next morning I'm scared to go home or call my mom and dad. I sometimes call my brothers and sisters to see if my parents are mad. Most of the times they are. I just hang out with my patna's and smoke, drink, sniff a line or two.

I sleep over my patna's house till Sunday night when I have to go to school. My parents know that my routine is always going out from Friday - Sunday night. I be scared to go home because my parents won't let me back in.

But nowadays I always go home. I learned that my parents would rather me go home every night so they know that I am safe. I love going home now, I get to use my own shower, eat my own food, and I know that my parents know that I'm safe.

**-Insane Viet**

**From The Beat: You're in an interesting position, because you learned a lot about what you want while you were in camp, right? But now when you get out, all those "patnas" will still be smoking, drinking, doing lines, partying... what will you do? Will you go out and stay away from home all night? Or do you have other plans?**

### Not Running Again

Today is a good day. I'm gonna leave next week to a group home for 9-12 month. I'm bout to do my time and get it over wit. I'm not gone run from my last group home like I did from my last four group homes. I'm gonna just wait to get out. This is my last time. I hope this gets in The Beat. I'll be gone, so peace out Beat.

**-Unknown**

**From The Beat: We glad to hear you say that you're not gonna run from your group homes anymore. Just do your time and you'll be home before you know it. Good luck!**

### Never a day

There was never a day when I didn't want to go home  
 To deal with my parent's 'cause I did something wrong  
 Because that's the only place I feel safe when I'm alone  
 Now I'm locked up and they telling me I gotta be strong  
 I know my mamma going crazy that I'm gone  
 I be stressing sittin' there in that cell  
 Don't smile much 'cause my lips dry as hell  
 And I hate how the nasty deodorant smell  
 Hella mad juveniles can't get no bail  
 But I met some cool people  
 One think he got girls but they'll tell you I'm finer  
 Met another dude who just got released  
 Hope he don't do nothing stupid and have to deal with  
 the police  
 Then we got a car thief  
 He might steal my daddy shhh and we gone have some  
 beef

**-Kwame**

**From The Beat: We know that Juvenile Hall ain't the place where you or your parents wanna see you at. But at the same time the laws are the laws. You have to do what you need to do to stay out of these facilities. And you know what you need to do, but it's up to you to do it.**

### Go home...

There are some days I don't want to go home. Like right now I'm kinda nervous to go home because I'm in jail for robbery. I don't know how they are going to react when I go home.

I don't know if they are going to try and kick me out the house and say that they don't allow criminals in the house or are they just going to just let me be and just not trust me. Whatever they do, I can't blame them.

**-Donald**

**From The Beat: Well we hope that they cut you some slack. Regardless of what you did, we also hope that you learned from this serious mistake, and show them that they made the right decision to have you return home. It's mistakes like these that really affect your life. Going out there robbing people on the street is gonna get you either hurt, or in jail for a long time.**

### I'm Not Going Home

There be times when I don't wanna come home, not because I'm gonna get in trouble, but because my momma drunk and high. I come home with an empty stomach thinking my mom cooked some food, but instead she cooked up some powder. I ask her if I can get some money so I can get something from the store.

But instead she asked me where my money at? Why I ain't got it. Then she yells at me to get out the apartment and go find some money. That's why I don't like coming home.

**-Edward**

**From The Beat: Man that sounds like an awful situation to be coming home to. You don't have another relative, uncle, auntie or grandma house you can go to?**

## Days I Don't Go Home

It is because I'm in a trouble and when I'm in a trouble. In my school, I got a lot of problems because I don't want to do what the teachers say. Then they send me outside of the classroom. And they still think I'm doing things that I am not suppose to do like keep talking, laughing.

Then them send me to the office and call my mom and that is why I don't want to go my home. Then I go home and my mom tell me don't do it again. When I go to the school I'm still doing it and I still get in trouble and it is the same thing.

**-Victor**

**From The Beat:** Why do you keep acting up at school? You're suppose to be at school getting an education so you can better yourself and improve your future. If you can't stand still at school maybe you should consider getting your GED so you can get a job and at least make some legit money.

## The Beat Within

What's good Beat? It's ya' boy Lil' Dave again, back for the sixth time with some real shhh, and once again they don't understand me maybe. I just wanna do the right thing and ride.

Yeah I read the Bible and I know about the Lord and why he puts us her on earth, so I know the differences in nature and being ungodly to our father who art in heaven.

Man I just wanna do right and survive and live a good life with my wify on the side. Yea they tried to send me away, but I bet that and I'm to camp back in the block or in the schoolhouse somewhere.

**-Lil' Dave**

**From The Beat:** It's not just about where they send you but also about where you send yourself after you do this next bit of time, right? Where are you going to be next, so that the sixth time can be the last time?

## Put My Stuff On

What's up Beat? Why don you ever want to put my stuff in the book just always want to hate.

**-Nacho Cheese**

**From The Beat:** Aint nobody hating lil' homie you're the one that's hating ,which we took out of this piece. You already know that we can't publish certain things you say. And if we don't publish your piece it's because it wasn't appropriate. Not because we don't want to. Look at your piece that you just wrote, you talking about the people around you are wannabes, etc. Why don't you write something positive? Quit worrying about everyone else, worry about your self! You ain't never gonna get anywhere in life if you worry about the people around you more than you worry about yourself.

## Days I didn't

Days I didn't want to go home I remember when I didn't want to go home. I didn't want to go home because my mom called and told me not to come home because there were police at my house looking for me. They were accusing me robbing a store four times.

They said some one told them it was me. They said that the person that did rob the store had a bunch of cuts because they found blood at the place that was robbed. And I had cuts on me so I didn't want to go home because I told my grandparents I wasn't going to do no more bad things, and the next couple of days there are cops looking for me talking about I robbed a store.

**-Lil' Pork**

**From The Beat:** Why are they saying that you were the one that robbed the store? If you didn't do it, then you have nothing to stress off of. And don't just tell your grandparents that you're not gonna get into any trouble, actually do it. Stop getting into trouble. We know you aint trying to make a career out of coming in and out of jail.

## The Stranger

A time someone helped me when I was in need was when I was stranded in Oakland at 1:30 in the morning. I ran from a group home and needed money for BART to get back to my house. I asked a random person for money and he gave me twenty dollars and a ride to BART. This was a time a stranger helped me out.

**-Travis**

**From The Beat:** That wasn't such a smart idea to run from your group home but that was sure nice of the person to help you out. Have you ever helped a stranger out?

## Just Want To Be Out

There are some days I don't want to go home for some reason or another. There usually isn't anything negative going on at my house but a lot of times I still prefer to stay out at a friends house or a Hotel and just chill with my friends and party or do whatever just to be away from home sometimes.

**-Anti-home**

**From The Beat:** As long as you're not on the streets then do what you do. But try to stay in doors. There's too much drama going on in the streets for you to get caught up in it.

## I Went To See My Son

The days when I don't want to go home it was one time when I ran from my group home. I was like damn I cut from my group home to see my lady and my son. So when I ran I cut to my dad house.

When I got home my dad was like why did you run. I told him why cause I want to see my son and my lady. So I ask him if I can sleep here he said yes. So I went to bed like at 11:30pm. Hayward PD where at my door like at 6 in the morning. So I am trying to say if you got to go to a group home stay with it don't run.

**-Dominion**

**From The Beat:** You're right. There's no use in running unless you wanna be hiding out for the rest of your life. Eventually you'll end up getting caught. Just do your program and get over it so you can move on with your life.

## Never Wanted To Go Home

Mostly everyday I never wanted to go home cause I never want to school. Even when I went to school I was getting suspended or ex-spelled for getting into fights or threatening people.

So I just went to the block to kick it with the homies. The only thing I probably went to my house was for changing clothes or to take a shower.

**-Michael**

**From The Beat:** Why can't you behave while you're at school? School is very important for your future. Education is what's going get you some real paper, later down the road in life. You can't hustle forever. And you can't keep running around getting into fights and threatening people. You might threaten the wrong person.

## Keep Coming Back

It's my fifth time coming to the hall. I said it was my last time coming here my second time. Apparently three, four, five times comes, and here I am again writing to The Beat - again. This is going to be my last time here though. I'm getting released on home supervision.

**-Lil' James**

**From The Beat:** We hope this is the last time. You've been back one too many times. It's time you appreciate your freedom a little more. Do what you need to do. Follow all your probation rules, and home supervision rules so you can get probation and you can get out the system.

## Mad!

What's up Beat? Well I'm back to the hall. I'm hella mad, but I can't do nothing about it just wait till I get sent to my other group home.

Well what happened was that I got sent to a group home in Chino Hills (in Southern California) and I ran from there and came to Oakland and started doing stupid stuff. That's why I got caught faster.

Well I got a new charge it is auto theft. I got picked up and came back. I only stayed there for two days because I didn't like it but when I came back I didn't wanna come out. But I still did that's why I got caught faster. Now I must see what's gonna happen.

**-Ernesto**

**From The Beat:** You should be mad at yourself from running from your group home just to come back and get caught for stealing cars and doing stupid shhh. Wake up Ernesto!! Why did you run away just to go keep committing more crimes? Why couldn't you stay out of trouble?

## The Group Home

The day I went into a group home suckers I switched to a house in the program. I was away from my family for one year and 2 1/2 months but when I go back I will continue my program in a group home.

It's all right, but I don't like to be away from my family. It is a two-year program and I failed it and got pulled out and went to the hall. I have been here for two weeks and a couple of days. I might go back this Thursday, but if I don't go, I will go back in the middle of April.

**-Thomas**

**From The Beat:** We know that it's hard being away from your family for too long. But think about them when you're at the group and try to complete the program so you can move on with your life and be reunited with your family.

## Playing Chess

I Like to play chess on my spare time. Now that I'm in jail I play it a lil' more. I played a few people in here but its one person in particular that I play a lot. Bryan aka B, he is like a rival when we play next, time we play I'm GONE WHOOP HIS ASS!!!!

**-John Doe**

**From The Beat:** In chess you are more likely to win if you can think a lot of moves ahead. Plan long term instead of looking for the immediate play. Can you learn to do that in real life too?

## Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness

I had my first loss in life when I was around three to five years old, because my pops wanted to help the next person--it was really my uncle--but he took the loss trying to help him and it went bad on his side.

So I lost my pops, but I won't kill anybody because I did try to play his part. I can't play captain to save a dad, but at the same time if I can do something about it, I will.

I still know inside that I love him and he will always be there for me, even though I can't see him. But the thing I most want to bring back if I could is his voice and a face to the person because I never remember seeing him.

That's all I care for, not killing the next man. It can't do anything for him really, but pops probably knows this where he is now.

**-Marquill**

**From The Beat:** "Living well is the best revenge." Do you think this is true. Imagine the love your dad had for you, and how proud he will be if you get your life together. When you do well in life or do/write something that makes you proud, do you think on him and how proud he would be?

## I Don't Care

Hey what's up The Beat this yo' boy Lil' Snoopy from Oakland. But the reason I don't care is because a lot of hot shhh been going on, and yesterday I got a write up for saggin...yeah saggin! Damn I was tryin' to do good 'cause I haven't gotten a write-up in three days... but staff be hatin.

And the other reason is 'cause my brother is doing 2 years for some dumb shhh. He in Rita right now, but I just hope he keep his head up and stay solid. And the last reason is 'cause my mom got a boyfriend and I DON'T KNOW him and I don't like that. But yeah, I'm just tryna get out so I can be with my boys and family in the outs 'cause this ain't koo! I just don't care anymore more 'cause this is making me mad.

But I'm gonna keep it solid only time would tell what's gonna go down, feel me?

But yeah I'm gonna just pimp this. I'm out.

**-Lil' Snoopy**

**From The Beat:** We admire the way you are holding up under all the stress. Between your brother suffering, your family switching up with a new boyfriend and all the drama at camp, you should be proud of yourself for the way you focus on trying to do well and avoid write-ups. Keep it up - it's called keeping your eyes on that prize: Freedom.

## Helped By A Stranger

A stranger that once helped me when I went to the hospital because I overdose off of alcohol. I didn't meet him but I heard that he helped me. I suppose this program help me out because I overdose. Like I said I didn't meet him but if I did I would like to be his friend.

**-Kao**

**From The Beat:** You're lucky that a complete stranger was compassionate enough to look out for you. We hope that you learned your listen and won't over dose again.

## Money, Power, Respect

Money everybody after money and money is a goal everybody in the world want to get without holding back.

Power is something everybody want and needs to take over and to have power you gotta have leadership and don't take no B-S

Respect is the main everybody needs and gotta have.

**-Chill**

**From The Beat:** We already know that money makes the world go 'round. You need it to survive, eat, pay for a home to stay at. But who says you need power? Why can't someone just be about getting their chips, live a good life, and stay away from all the negativity.

## At My Friends House

The reason I don't go home because I got in trouble in school, or else me and my daddy get into it at home. I use to stay at my friend's house and I always lie to my friend's mom. She never used to know. The way I sneak in is by the back of his window. His window is always open.

One day I was trying to sneak in the window but it was closed. So that meant that she went to my friends room and my friend doesn't like his mom going to his room because we always use to have parties all the time. His friends use to smoke weed all the time.

**-Francisco**

**From The Beat:** That's not a valid reason not to go home. If you're getting into it with your pops it's 'cause y'all both obviously disagree on something. But running away from your problems ain't the solution. We can understand if you want to sleep over your friends house for a party or something, but don't think that's the solution the problems you're having at home. You have to own up and accept any consequences for your actions.



## Rest in Peace, Stranger

The first time I met a stranger was when I was out on the streets kicking it. His name was Brian Keith Y.

He was putting money in my pockets when I didn't have no money. After a few months later he passed away when he was off coke. Somebody shot him in the head.

Rest In Peace Brian.

**-Derrick**

**From The Beat:** It's good to think that as messed up as his life was, he managed to help someone who was struggling. Like, he did a good deed by helping you - and now we hope you will do a good deed for others in his memory

## I Want Revenge

If I could get revenge on someone I would get revenge on this boy that jumped me and my brother Joe. Because me and my brother did not do anything, and they was way older and bigger than us too.

But we still we put up a fight even though we got beat up bad that day. The only thing that count is that as brothers we had each other's back and that is all I care about but as for revenge I want that.

**-Correy**

**From The Beat:** That's messed up that some older fools jumped you and your brother. But forget about it man, you already put up your fight and lost. Accept it. Don't go looking for trouble 'cause it might come to you 1,000 times worse. Just be glad nothing more serious happened.

## Revenge

Let me talk about this topic: Revenge.

Well I'll tell you that it's the only thing that fixes shhh, because when people think that it's cool to mess with the family or homies, and ain't nothing going to happen -- they got another thing coming.

**-D**

**From The Beat:** Tough talk, but how many funerals have you dealt from this mentality? Revenge just leads to more revenge and more deaths and more tears. Why not protect your loved ones by keeping them AWAY from situations that could put them in harm's way?

## Pain in My Heart: I Didn't Want To Go Home

Three weeks ago, I went on a home pass. But it wasn't a home pass at all, it was a battlefield. You see, I guess the week before, that's when my mom dropped me off at camp. I guess she had got into my phone when I was in the shower at the house, but she called my girl --you know the one with the smooth chocolate skin.

Yeah, well she called her talking hella shhh, talking 'bout leave me alone or she gonna call the boys! So I come home, I text my girl, and she blow up, talkin' 'bout she aint messin' with me no more and din hangs up in my face. That set me off, OK. Next me and my moms is funkin' but I'm at my brother's tournament so I got to lay low, so I asked my pops to take me home. I got home and I cut.

I cut to the streets and got hella drunk. I don't even drink, but my heart was hurtin'. Then I got into a couple fights with some dudes talking shhh And den I messed up and smoked some weed and passed out. Got kicked to camp the next day and caught a dirty. Well that's that, and I'm goin' home this week.

**-Spwaru**

**From The Beat:** The big thing that hurts on this is that you went crazy because you were in pain. Bad things are going to keep happening in your life, the way they happen to all of us... but it's about what you DO with them. What do you think made you need to add more hurt to your hurt by drinking? Are there other things you could do the next time you stress?

## Lost Someone I Love

I just lost my best friend two days ago to some stupid stuff. 'Cause he was messing with these suckas. I guest they caught him slippin' and shot him in the leg.

He was running back to his turf and I guest he lost too much blood and died on the spot.

**-Lil' Cone Head**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry to hear about your loved one passing away. Remember, revenge is not going to bring him back. We know you're feeling a lot of pain, but yo' potna looking down on you trying to tell you not to get into any trouble.

## I Been Waiting Nine Months

It's your boy Looney, still up here at camp keeping it solid feel me. I seen my son this weekend, it was cool. I already miss him...he's already changing. He peed on me. LOL! All on my leg too. It's cool though... I wasn't mad or nothing. I changed his diapers the whole time I was home this weekend. I'm gonna get his feet tatted on my chest with his name over it. You know I think that would be cool.

Man I'm so glad I got a baby... I've been waitin for nine months, then finally, bam he's here. That's pretty crazy. But Beat I'll get back at you. Later.

**-Looney**

**From The Beat:** Again, Looney, congratulations. It's great to see you stepping into this fatherhood role with so much love. Does knowing your little boy is waiting for you make it easier to avoid camp drama, and easier to plan for your future?

## When I Ran, An Interview

TBW: So when did you run from Camp?

LS: I ran from camp like a few plus months ago.

TBW: Where'd you run to and how'd you get there?

LS: I went straight to BayFair mall and hopped on The BART all dirty from hopping the Fence and going down the hills, but yeah I had some money and then I went to Dublin Pleasanton with my other two homies.

TBW: Did you get caught up in any drama while you were out?

LS: Yeah as soon as we got to Bayfair, we were 'bout to get into it with some rival gang members, but they ran. Then another day I got chased by some rival gang members with weapons. I had to run...run for my life.

TBW: Did your parents know where you were?

LS: No my mom knew I was with my boys but she was mad and didn't care 'cause she was tired of me being bad. But yeah, she didn't even know.

TBW: How did you come back? Did you turn yourself in?

LS: It was hella fun! I was having so much fun 'cause I was out and doing it big with my cousin and patnas and I was ridin' around in my patna's car just smashin' and going hella fast on the freeway, getting' hella lit feel me...And it wasn't coo' I wanted to turn myself in like two years later, feel me? Just go to Rita and be with some patnas but everything happens for a reason right?

TBW: So what was the reason do you think?

LS: Probly 'cause God had a better thing for me, feel me? Probably I was gonna die or 'cause some more problem in the outs and gotten me a bigger charge or something... but yeah probly just another chance.

God works in mysterious ways, feel me?

And for that, I thank him!

**-Lil' Snoopy**

**From The Beat:** We're happy that you got this second chance, because on the run is exactly how a lot of people get in the deep trouble. But if God, as you say, has given you the second chance, isn't it on you to show Him (and yourself) respect and take that chance? What are you doing to take that chance and show you are thankful for real?

## One day...

One day I was in middle school and I was going to Elmhurst and I was always messing up so when we getting report cards and the parents suppose to come and get them but I didn't think my mama was gone come.

But next thing you know she popped up and went to all my classes. I had straight D's and F's. I didn't want to go home but when I end up going, I got punished. I was hella mad, I still kept messin' up but I ain't get no more punishments.

**-Ouch**

**From The Beat:** We understand that school is not for everyone, but at least give it a shot. It is very important that you at least try because you might think you're not built for school but with time anyone can adjust to the schedule. School is important for your future. School is where you figure out what you want to do in life so you can get major paid in a legit way. That block shhh is only gonna take you so far, and it might take you way too far deep into the system.

## My Trip To the Hall

Well this is my second time in the hall. The first time is when I got caught in a stolo but they let me go in the first day, but I got bars. But now I got four weeks.

The second time was 'cause I was in a stolo but that day I had a gun on me. I busted a left, I see a police car then the car busted a U-turn. Then I stepped on the gas but when I was two blocks away I seen another cop car, but he tried to block me and then I smashed off.

Then I came to a stop and got off to run and dump my gun, but I fell and the dog bit me on my ass. That's how I got caught.

**-Raul**

**From The Beat:** What do you get out of stealing cars and going on high speed chases with the police? Nothing but jail time homie. You put your life endanger and your freedom in jeopardy and for what? Is that what you want do for the rest of your life? Or do you have any other goals?

## The Stranger

I once gave a stranger my last money when I was going to get a high. But how he asked, it sounded like he was hungry.

So, if I was gone, giving it already, I can't take it back. Even though I know I can, you can't take back what was given. Even when he said he was going to use the money for getting something.

**-Marquill**

**From The Beat:** You answered the part of you that cares about other human beings, so even though you way he used the money isn't what you wanted, are you still proud of yourself for Doing the Right Thing?

## Who Am I?

Who am I? I'm a thug angel.

You can see two sides of me from different angle

My bad side help me with my struggle.

My good side helps me with all of my trouble.

Sometime the dark side taking over me.

Screw everybody and that's the only way to be

Getting money that's all on my mind.

I'm not joking my ninja, I stay on my grind.

I stick with my ninja, aye dawg I try to shine.

But as I grow older, I knew I was blind,

Now 90% of me, is my good side

10% of the bullshhh I just let it slide.

All this fake ninja talking I just let it fly

**-Fake or Real**

**From The Beat:** How will you feed and grow this new 90 percent? Where will you find the positive peers to reinforce it? It's time to put the thug away and listen to the angel!

## Hall Business

What's up Beat? This is your homeboy Chikillo. Well tonight I'm gonna write about what's going on in here in the hall. Well aint nothing good going with me 'cause I think I'm gonna go to R.O.P to do my time.

But I'm not tripping because I did the crime. So I gotta do my time. Even though it's far away I still must finish my program to get back out there in the streets kicking it and smoking and specially to be with my homeboys. Well beat this vato is out. Alratos.

**-Chikillo**

**From The Beat:** Is all that you are thinking about? Kicking it with your homies and smoking and drinking? How about your son? Don't you wish you can go home to be with your son? You got your priorities all messed up friend, we know it's . You must like being locked up!

## A Better Person Inside

I need to get money but I really need to get free. It's my responsibility to help prevent younger people from making mistakes like I did in the past! If I could help out the people in my community I would feel like a better person on the inside. A lot of times I have to stop myself from letting out my negative energy on people.

When I get out, I want a lot of my people to have accomplished positive things. I'm talking about goals in life that will help out them as well as their people.

We need to look out for people.

**-Ice-Mayne**

**From The Beat:** Once you know your own mind, you will be able to do more for your loved ones and community. So how will you learn your own mind? What are your goals, specifically?

## Can't Wait

I'm 'bouts to complete camp, keep my life movin' and try to stay positive. I just started to do my program but time be flyin'.

I hope it goes good for me. This camp hella weak. Hopefully, this time helps me out and that god gives me the patience I need to get by. It's all good though, you gotta keep your eyes on the prize and I'm really focused. I'm tired of the system and can't wait to get out. For all who are locked up keep your head up. Be a player about yours and pimp the situation. Everything happens for a reason, just make something outta nothing. My main focus is getting OFF probation, the prize is my freedom.

**-Mousie**

**From The Beat:** The prize is freedom, you're right. But getting it is a lot easier than keeping it. What do you think makes people give up that prize so quickly after their release, while being on lockdown makes them miss it more than ever?

## I Miss My Moms

I miss my moms

She been there since day one

Moms been in and out of court for me

Word can't express how I feel

Never kept a secret always stayed real

All I can say is I love you

And miss you

My plan is to success and show you I understand.

I know you want me to finish school go to college

I love you mom.

**-Big Mike**

**From The Beat:** Your mom sees the good in you and the smart in you - that's why she has faith in you. Do you have faith in yourself? Can you see yourself in college? Try to imagine it, try to imagine how good that would feel... that's the first step towards making it happen!

## What I Wish I Could Say To My Homies Who Have Died

Please Read Downward:

Today	about	I	shhh	streets	I
I'm	who	would	ain't	and	look
writing	would	let	been	i	fat
about	you	them	the	my	it
the	call	know	same	time	like
homies	that	that	without	comes,	how
that	passed	I	them	then	MacDre
passed,	away	always	here,	I'll	put
because	and	got	but	die	it
lately	my	them	I'm	happy	"Life's
I've	answer	on	a	'cause	a
been	to	my	young	I	witch
feelin'	that	mind.	man,	know	and
down.	would	They	so	I	then
I	be	were	it's	got	you
remember	the	like	my	them	die."
about	homies,	big	turn	waitin'	Much
two	just	brothers	to	for	love
years	to	me —	step	me	to
ago	let	Mono	up	up	The
that	them	Fino	and	in	Beat.
you	know	Chino	do	the	I'm
guys	I'll	and	my	Mansion	up.
had	Always	Jokin'	thang	ha!	Love,
a	love	Man,	on	ha!	
topic	them		them	man	

**-Young Menace**

**From The Beat:** Very clever! Yes, we got rid of your gang/good name too! If you could talk to any or all of your homies who have died, just you and each homie, what would you tell them? What would you ask them? Was doing whatever they did that got themselves killed worth their lives? What would they do now, if they had the same choice? Can you imaginatively talk to them and from what you know about them, answer yourself as best you can from their points of view, and then listen to their lessons about what death is like? Maybe you will feel more precious about your own life and protect it with all your might.



## Back In The Halls

What's up Beat? I back here in the halls for the 17th time. Man, they supposed to just let me go home, but they tryin' to send me to another group. I just did nine months in a group home in Chino Hills in South Cali near LA. All I did was tell my PO I didn't want to be there no more, and he said OK, I can go to the halls then for 10 days at the most.

Now he trying to send me to another group home and I'm 18 already. I tried to tell him send me to 850, but he on some bullshhh. If I go to 850 I would probably get out faster or just get bailed out. I just hope I get out soon!

**-Kizzer One**

**From The Beat:** If you've already been here 17 times and in other groupers, why do you want to get out soon? Seems like you're determined to be a prisoner, one way or another. The only evidence we can see from this is not that your PO is trying to play you, but that you are trying to play the system, and in the end, you're playing yourself. What will it take?

## Things I Don't Care About

What's up with The Beat? Hopefully all of y'all at The Beat doin' cool. Hopefully y'all financial problems are taken care of themselves.

Today I'm 'bout to write about things I don't care about. Beat, y'all know I had to switch up the topic just a little bit. I don't care about anything but protecting my family and taking care of my family. I don't care about the law or the justice system. Beat, I'm up, out, so if y'all print it, y'all do. If y'all don't, don't. One love.

**-The Dude**

**From The Beat:** Well, that must be real. It's admirable that your family has your heart. Tell us more about your family! Do you have brothers and sisters? What are your parents like? How do you influence your family? Teach them? Help them? Who are you in relation to all of your family?

## Waiting To Touch Down

What's up, Beat? This is G Enano chilling at the Ranch, waiting for that day to touch down. I got a few more months and I'm back to the spot. I been gone for a minute. This system has had me down for a minute. I'm eighteen, so the next step is 850 (Bryant—San Francisco County Jail.) I know if I keep doing what I do, I'm going there, but one thing I know is I don't want to stop. I might go to 850, so if you ain't gonna stop doing what you do, you coming back to jail. So if you want to be thuggin' like I do, we gonna live a thug lifestyle. This is G Enano and I'm out.

**-G Enano**

**From The Beat:** Please read what you've just written. You already know what's probably going to happen to you if you keep doing whatever it is you do that brings you into juvy, then the Ranch. You can stop yourself! Haven't you already spent enough of your young life incarcerated? What do the streets, the gang, the 'hood, juvy, jail have to teach you that you don't already know? Why don't you challenge yourself and try something else? Become the electrician your father trained! You've got skills, talent, but it sounds like you have no hope! Why not?

## Stressing

This shhh here got a ninja stressing in here! I'm stressing 'cause I can't wait until I get out! I never worry 'bout the ninjas in here 'cause they don't pump no fear in me. But I worry about my ninjas on the outs! Whether they're dead or not. I worry about my family, how they're doing, whether they're alive or not. I can't wait until I get out so I could get back! We all we got!

**-Wink**

**From The Beat:** Okay, you will get out, that's for sure. And then what? Will you just keep doing the things that take you away from your family and homies, the things that lead to the box, or are there changes in your future?

## When I Don't Want To Go Home...

There are the days when the night is simply too fun to go home. So I stay out all night till the morning, stay at a homie's house, rent out a room at a little hotel.

There are the days when I am not speaking to my mother and that why I don't go home.

There are days that just don't feel right going home. Now my reason will be because I live too far and it's too late to get home in a safe way.

**-Vanessa**

**From The Beat:** We can understand your reasons for not wanting to go home, sometimes, but we wonder whether any of these reasons (having too much fun, staying out all night, fighting with your mother) are connected to losing your freedom, and not being allowed to go home? How has being locked up changed your ideas about home?

## RIP T-Weez

Damn, I just lost my cousin. I really miss my ninja for real, an' I'm really mad 'cause I can't even go to the funeral. I go to court a day after, but I don't know what I'ma do when I get out 'cause I ain't neutral about what happened.

I ain't talked to none of my family except my mom and my sister, and I know they don't think like I think or go through, let alone know about what happens when I'm not home. And I just got off probation two months ago. But my pain is gone be felt. That my blood line an' I'ma miss my ninja.

**-Young Dunny**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry for your loss, another senseless death of someone who should have had a long life ahead. We can understand the pain of losing a family member, but before you think about revenge, think about the pain your mother and sister would feel for you if you were the one that someone else was writing about. The cycle of a life for a life leads to more and more pain, for more and more people. Of course you're not neutral about your cousin's death, but there are many ways to remember him without putting another mother into permanent grief.

## Revenge Feels Good

How does it feel to take revenge when someone has done wrong to you? Man, I'm tell you ninjas straight like this, Leroy! Revenge feel real good when you go do what you do, but in the long run, you still can't replace yo' homie or whoever you lost. But you still feel good inside because you know you just rocked for ya homie, and you know what he expects from you when he die. So revenge feel real good, dog!

**-Young Ice**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes, things that feel good aren't really good. Shooting heroin can make you feel good, too, but it will bring you down real fast. We wonder how long the feeling that revenge brings you lasts. The government executes killers, but what is the lesson this teachers, except that killing is a way to solve problems? When you take the revenge you're talking about, you continue a cycle of death for death which can only lead to more death. Who will have the courage to break that cycle?

## Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness

It would be dreadful for me to lose anyone close to me. I know for a fact I will have change in my life. But if it's a matter of something that needs to be handled.

It's a must... no exceptions when it comes to fam.

**-Vanessa**

**From The Beat:** We're not sure what you need to handle, but if you're talking revenge for something that's gone down, then you're writing your own ticket back to the box. It's a must... No exceptions!

## RIP Chino

What up with The Beat? It your boy Grimy. I'm over here talking about the day I lost the homie that mean hella much to the 'hood. RIP Chino and the other fallen warriors. But anyway, the homies died for the cause.

When it happen, I was at home sick. I was talking to the homie and they said the homie died and I was shocked because I was just kicking it with the homie and it only took ten seconds for the whole thing to happen.

But that day I would never forget, the day you passed away (07/4/84 to 03/25/06). RIP Chino. You will never be forgotten.

**-Grimy**

**From The Beat:** So many "warriors" lost to the cause, and always a different cause. (We send them to Iraq for one cause; you have another cause; your enemies have yet a third cause.) And all we see are young men killing other young men leaving broken families behind, mothers who will never get over the needless loss of their sons. We're sorry about your loss, but is any cause worth it?

## I Love My Family

I learned a lot about the streets. I learned that there was a lot of people dying in the Mission. I learned mostly the 'hood is sick, and I really call them my family. They watch my back and I watch their backs.

There are a lot of vodka drink around my neighborhood. I mostly protect my mom dad sister, teddy and my cousins. I love them with my whole heart. I will die for my family. If you mess with my family or 'hood, there will be problems or worse.

I miss my family. Stay up, my sister told me. I love my family with my whole heart.

**-Lil' Jon**

**From the Beat:** Your family doesn't need you to die for them. How could that help them or make them happy? They want you to live, to be free, to be able to stay with them and not end up in a box being told what to do by strangers. Don't you know that all those people dying out there had someone watching their backs, and it didn't keep them alive. Love requires some sacrifices, so if you want to show your love, you have to sacrifice the things that let the system take you away from them.

## Ask For A Hug

Everyone is stuck in the game  
They trying to get up their fame  
Ninjas trying to go hard and start popping  
They be always rocking and there ain't no stopping  
Always be on their blocks  
Holding up their gun stocks  
They shooting down the other elites  
Tryna be a gangsta in the streets  
Ain't no point in being a thug  
If you a gangster just ask yourself  
Did you ever have a hug?

**-Ct**

**From The Beat:** We think you're pointing out something important, which is the game can often be a substitute for the lack of love in children's lives. Are you stuck in the game? We hope not, because you have some skills and some knowledge to teach. Keep writing.

### Days When I Don't Want To Go Home

Its been a few time when I didn't want to go home. Not because of what my parents would do, but what the boys would. When I'm on the run, them peoples come to the spot messing with me constantly to the point where I moved out the way to the honey comb hide out. Shhh cold like that, but what can I do? Cold game.

**-Joe Dirt**

**From The Beat:** They say if you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. We could reverse that in your case and say that if things are cold in the game, get out of the game!

### I Had To Forgive

Yeah, in '07 I lost my big cousin, Mitch, you know, hatin', man. But the worst thing to see was my aunty when she saw her only son lying in the casket. It made me so angry and sad at the same time.

I'ma beast. I had to forgive. Can't beef forever. He ain't here no more.

**-Ray**

**From The Beat:** We wish you had written more details about how you forgive, and how you leave the beef behind. We admire what you've written, but it makes us want to know more.

### Money Is All

Man, the days when I didn't want to go home was because the spot was booming like hell. Ninjas was outside zoomin', just doing shhh real ninjas do. Sometimes I just be wanting to go mess with my female fo' couple of days.

My main reason is money 'cause without that, it ain't shhh. A ninja really be tryin' to hit fat house licks. Where I come from, a ninja gone always go fo the money or licks. But chu know how I feel, money over females.

**-Lil' Junk**

**From The Beat:** On this day, forty years ago, the great Civil Rights' leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. So, when we read pieces like this, talking about what "real ninjas" do, it just makes us angry. What was his sacrifice all about? We'll leave it at that.

### My Lil' Story

Well, I'm going to write about the days when I don't want to go home. I remember when I was in the 7th grade at Benjamin Franklin, and I remember I used to cut school and go meet with my boyfriend that I thought I was so in love with, But I was wrong. I was too young to know what love was,

I was supposed to be home at 5:30 and I would get home late like around 7:30 or 8:00. My mom wasn't home. She would be at work. But when she got home, I knew I had one coming, I remember I used to be on the bus going home, and I would be thinking, like, "Damn, what lie do I make up now?" Now I just reminisce, like, "Damn, that was crazy!"

But yeah, guess this will be my last time in here writing in The Beat. But when I get out, I definitely will holla back to y'all. I like this program. All right, this my lil' story. Late.

**-Monstrita**

**From The Beat:** We like this story, Monstrita, because it reminds us of the little lies we used to have to tell when we didn't come home when we were supposed to. We'll miss you in The Beat, but we're pulling for you to stay out of here, and not to do anything that threatens your freedom. And we'll look forward to hearing from you on the outs.

### Revenge

What's good with The Beat? This yo' boy V-Guttah, holding it down. Well, today I'm talking about revenge. Man, I want revenge on the judge and the DA. To hell with both of them. I hope I catch them on the come around, you dig.

I'm like ha, ha, ha, ha laughing at them haters. Keep y'all heads up. Remember we do the time, time don't do us.

**-V-G**

**From The Beat:** When are you going to write us something that is meaningful, that teaches something, that is more than just nonsense. Threatening the judge and the DA is the worst kind of nonsense because you've given them all the power they need to control your life. Why would you promise to hand over even more control? Have you started thinking yet (using the time instead of losing the time)? We'd like to see some evidence of that.

### We Ain't Gonna Come Back

Boy, we're so close to each other  
 But I barely see you, not able to talk to you  
 Every time I see you, you got a smile on your face  
 And you always put a smile on my face  
 Baby, I love the way you kiss me, the way you hold me  
 The way you make me feel so good  
 I hope the both of us get up outta here ASAP  
 It's been a long time since we talked  
 I want to talk to the real you  
 It's just too much that happened  
 Once the both of us get up outta here  
 We ain't gonna come back here  
 We just go to school do good, whatever we could  
 And just do our time so we could both graduate from  
 high school  
 Have a great time together, enjoy ourself  
 Boo, I miss you so much you're running through my  
 mind 24/7  
 You my best friend, boyfriend, baby that I always care for  
 Boy, I love you so; it's forever you and I.

**-Pamela**

**From The Beat:** The most important thing you've written in this love poem is the promise to "just go to school" when you get out, and graduate from high school. We hope the object of your love does the same, but our concern is for you, so whether he understands the importance of what you've written or not, we hope you see that as your first priority.

### Young Soldier

I'ma soldier... Y'all may say that people can't change, but don't get twisted 'cause I'm a strong individual. But the boys training to run up in our familia... Abuses, excuses, and the game is getting colder.

And yeah, we say tripping dumb stupid bs got me messed, but we don't do it for free no more. We come ready, and y'all know we don't trip about the money. We spend. All eyes on us like Machiavelli. I know how the game.

I'ma put y'all in some true or wherever y'all call it. I'ma young soldier and I'ma be about it, melting all this haters till the day that I die. Y'all know ninjas don't like us 'cause we come sick.

That's I got y'all ninjas, but I'ma little thug locked up in juvie. All I think about is creaking all them haters, trust me. We know we been here and done that, but I'm in some other stuff now. I finna bounce back.

**-Shadow**

**From The Beat:** If you insist on writing things that are not appropriate for The Beat, we will just keep cutting those things from what you write. The most important thing you told us is that you are a "little thug locked up in juvie." The rest of this piece is like an announcement that you plan to be a big thug locked up in the pen. We hope that doesn't happen to you, because if it does, you'll look back at this little experience with regrets and tears, wishing you were back here. We hope you don't wait until then to make some changes, but that's up to you.

## The Snitch

What pissed me off was my ninja turned out to be fake. The ninja said he was my dog but was a vicious snake. I knew he wasn't shhh when the beef finally came. He bought a gun to try an' get a name. The ninja got shot, but he scared to bust his shhh. Every time we got rapped, the ninja snitched. He the type of ninja that steal yo' bundle and help you find it, knowin' goddamn well the shhh up in his pocket.

**-Frontline Dni**

**From The Beat:** We can't tell which one of you is the bigger fool, him for snitching or you for hanging with a snitch and giving him the ammunition he needed to save himself. The entire system is built on a foundation of snitches, from the hall to death row, trading information for their own safety, so if you keep giving it to them, you'll keep getting wrapped. Up to you!

## Ready To Get Own

Yeah, what's up with The Beat? I'm ready to get down for real, man. This jail shhh ain't cool. I'm tryna beat this case and touch down. A ninja be going to Omega and they be saying some real shhh that I be soaking up.

I got my mind right and I think I'm ready to bounce and don't come back like most.

I'm outta here Mike. Betta put my shhh in there, or you don't be lookin' like Albert Einstein. I'm out.

**-Bb**

**From The Beat:** We like what you've written, but we wish you would put in more details. For example, what do you hear at Omega that is reaching you, changing the way you think? What are you soaking up? And what does it mean to you to get your mind right? Do you have a plan for when you walk out of here? It doesn't have to be elaborate, but you better think about the steps you want to take, and then try to follow those steps. Otherwise, someone else will be making those plans for you.

## My Rap

What's up with The Beat? This ya boy Chris holding shhh down in this so-called maximum security. They should change this unit name to Maximum Day Care. All these ninjas in here is soft like marshmallows, ya dig? I'ma spit a quick flow for y'all. Ain't nothing special though.

15 years old going hard at a young age  
You ain't even on my level, I'm on a further page  
I'm that vicious lion locked up in this cage  
This beef shhh ain't no game  
Thuggin' shhh out runs in my family vein

**-Lil' Canon**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry, but we had to clean up your rap/No threats of gunplay, no bustin' a cap/We're not about killing, no not in the least/We're more about love, about taming the beast/You may think that your harder than others in here/But all that will get you is prison and tears/You're locked in a cell with cement for a bed/But you're right, it is daycare, compared to what lies ahead!

## Forgive And Forget?

Just found out my boyfriend is having a baby. A whole lot of he-say-she-say. I went to jail on his b-day and he basically forgot all about me. I'm supposed to be the love of his life. Should I forgive and forget?

**-Nenee**

**From The Beat:** This is such an old story, Nenee. It happens every day because children are being raised by children and thinking they're adults. We can't tell you whether to forgive and forget or not, but we can encourage you to wait before you bring a new life into this world because the fact that you're here says you're not ready (and, at your age, you shouldn't be ready). You have to remember that by doing whatever it was that gave the system the power to take you from her, you showed that you weren't really thinking of him, either.

## Hurry Up!

What's good with The Beat? This Ulala! Waitin' ta get the heck up outta here! Mayne, yo I'm just wondering what they gonna do with the young uce... Is it Seattle or straight to the Ranch wit' my big ass? Heh heh heh!

Keep yo' head up, and be smooth, And screw the system...

And to The Beat, try ta say something stupid... I'll break yo'... (To be continued...)

**-Ulala**

**From The Beat:** Well, if you can say something stupid, why can't we?

## What Make Shadow Mad

What makes shadow mad is that Shadow is still locked up. I got charged three months ago. I've been locked up for three months for nothing. It's cool though. My co-partners been got out. My home girls got out. Another thing that's makes Shadow mad is I can't have Payasa 'cause I'm locked up.

Shadow also gets mad when Shadow gets room time. Shadow got mad when Shadow got DRB for dive days for taking off on a rival after the little ceremony because Shadow didn't want to stop fighting. Them wack-ass wannabes tried to jump Shadow, so Shadow took off first. Shadow's enemy couldn't hang, and them other suckas didn't want to see me, ha.

But Shadow learned his lesson. No mas drama because Shadow 'bout to get out soon to Sacramento or Vasilias by Tulare. Shadow 'bout to be 18 soon.

But all right then, this boriqua is gone. Much love and respecto. I'ma be home soon so see me when you see me, carnal.

**-G Shadow**

**From The Beat:** We will miss you in the workshops, GS, because you always write — and sometimes what you write blows us away. But at other times, we can't escape the feeling that Shadow is his own worst enemy, and that until Shadow learns to control the way he's been living, he may be in for some rough roads ahead. We want to be proven wrong about this, and we hope we are. When you get to your group home, write us.

## Tattoos

What's good with The Beat? When I get out I'm gone get a tat on my arm of my mama because that's my best friend and the only one I can trust. My second tat is gone be on my chest saying "fear no man but god trust no female and stay loyal to family."

**-Lano**

**From The Beat:** Let's get this straight. Your mama is your best friend but you're going to get a tat that says "trust no female." Hmmm. Sounds like a contradiction to us. Plus, you must have a hella big chest to get all that tatted there!

## Life When I Get Out

When I get out, I have to do better. No more JJC. If anything, I'm going to the big house and I'm good. I'm not trying to go to the big house. What I'm going to do is finish school, get a job, go and travel to hella places.

I just want to do better and make my family happy for what I do, and also myself. I'm out this hole. Late.

**-Eb**

**From The Beat:** We hope you are able to follow through on your plans to finish school, because that could be the key to everything else good you want to happen in your life. Where would you like to travel to? What would you like to see. We think that traveling outside this country is one of the most valuable educational experiences anyone can have, so we encourage you to keep that dream in your sights.

## Forgiveness Is Not Easy

What's up with The Beat? This ya boy Young Dave holding it down in the max unit.

But yeah, I'ma tell y'all about a person I lost that was real close to me. He was shot and killed two years ago for some dumb shhh. But yeah, at that time I wanted revenge on everybody that got in my way. But a few years later, I tried to give forgiveness but it was not that easy.

But yeah, I'm gone right now. Holla at me later.

**-Dave**

**From The Beat:** Every time we read of another young man shot to death on these violent streets, we know it was for "some dumb shhh." What could ever be "smart" about killing of our children? We would love for you to spend a little more time telling us about your effort to forgive, even if you were never able to succeed. Yes, forgiveness is difficult, but it may be the only way back to community health. Give us your thoughts. (RS. No RIPs, unless you write an entire piece about the person you're paying tribute to.)

## Never The Same

It feels like shhh to lose someone close to you. It feels like being killed yourself. It feels so bad. It really a feeling you can't explain until a lot of time goes by and then you can try to explain your pain. But it will never feel the same.

**-Tory**

**From The Beat:** We agree with the way you've described losing someone as a feeling that words can't explain. All we can say is that time helps to reduce the pain, though it never takes it away completely.

## The Stranger

I was walking down the street. It was raining outside and I didn't have an umbrella. Then this boy walked up and he let me use his umbrella. I met him and I actually started to like him.

He called me every day, and he became my boyfriend. We talked for two years, and he said he wanted to be with me forever. Even though I haven't seen him in almost four months, I know that he still loves me and would do anything for me.

**-Baby Kay**

**From The Beat:** This is a sweet story, Baby Kay. But if you have someone so nice in your life, why would you do the things that let the system take you away from him? If he would do anything for you, maybe it's time for you to do something for yourself, which is to make smarter choices, the kind that preserve your freedom and allow a relationship like this to mature into something more.

## Moist Living: Chapter #1

It was a bright and sunny day in the hard-core streets of San Francisco. The ladies was out today, and man was I feeling like I was in a tip-drill video. I'm a mansion, a well known thug ninja around these streets. But it all started when it was a party when I met this lil chick named Cheeks. The reason why they call her Cheeks is because mammy had an ass like a caddy truck. I mean if she walk backward, her ass might start beeping.

So me being me, I had to speak. I made my way toward her and said, "A bay bay! Wha' 'sup wit' chu. ma?" in a tough but loving manner. She looked at me as if I was stupid, but I paid no mind to that. I started to speak again, but said nothing. I was getting ready to walk away when she stopped me and said, "I am sorry. I'm just going through some things wit' my ninja. He cheatin' on me."

**-T-House**

**From The Beat:** Well, since it's only chapter one, we don't want to be too hard on you. But, if we heard your come-on line (and knew that it was motivated by nothing more than her big butt), then we might look at you as if you were stupid, too. We're hoping this story goes somewhere deeper than where it starts...

## Loss, Revenge, And Forgiveness

What's good Beat? This that solo cholo Gangsta Shadow. That young boriqwa.

A loss I felt was the passing of the homie Chino (7/4/84-3/25/06). I was locked up when it happened, and I called my homie, and he told me. I went off. I got DRB, and when I got my 30 minutes of rec, I took off on this one kid when he went to the bathroom. When I was in my room, I cried. I swore to get revenge.

He was a good homie too. He had flows on the mic kids, he loved hella stuff going for him. I got four different RIP shirts of him. I got all the CDs where he was on them. His anniversary is next week, so hopefully I'm out to crack one of them Hennesseys open without any chaser. Gone but not forgotten.

**-G Shadow**

**From The Beat:** This is the second RIP to Chino in this unit. But there are so many losses, that we can't keep count, and that's like a plague, a disease that is wiping out a generation. You wanted to cry, so you went off on some kid who had nothing to do with your loss or your pain. And so it continues. The path you've taken hasn't worked well for you, and it didn't work well for Chino. You are smart, but are you smart enough to see that life is worth much more than this endless cycle of kill and be killed, one for them and one for you? Sometimes we think that the human brain is an evolutionary dead-end, and that we won't stop until the entire species is wiped out!

## Not Without A Fight

Yeah, what's up Beat? Me, well I'm still fighting this can-ass CYA recommendation. I'm not trying to go up there. I'm not saying I can't do it 'cause I can do my time. It's just I'm not going down without a fight! Feel me!

**-Angel**

**From The Beat:** This is almost not worth printing, Angel, because it says very little except that you plan to fight the recommendation to CYA. Why not educate us a little bit with the opportunity The Beat gives you. Why are they recommending CYA? How much are you (not them) responsible for this? How do you plan to fight it, and how do you plan to use whatever time you may get, here or there or somewhere else, to take back control of your life? Have you learned anything in this process? If so, can you share some of that with us?

## Living For The Moment

What's poppin' with The Beat, dawg? Yeah, man, once again this be that young ninja Yesay aka Iggus, ya heard me. But check it out, dawg, a ninja just went to court today and they hollerin' 'bout some out-of-range shhh like Wyoming. Ha ha! They got this young ninja messed up, dawg.

I'ma shake back to my section where it's gully, ya heard me, and just live for the moment, dawg. Y'all betta come see about this young ninja, dawg. I ain't no lyrical ninja, I just tell y'all what's going wit' me. Check out.

**-Iggus**

**From The Beat:** Shake back to your section, and you'll soon be shaking back to this section. It follows as the night follows the day. But when you live for the moment, being locked up comes with the territory.

## Always In My Heart

What's good with The Beat? This yo' boy KickR. Well...

I remember the old days. I remember the day I met you. I met you at the park. Since that day, we got closer and closer. I remember when we used to play fight, hug you, be with you mostly at the park every day.

Then we both disappeared for a minute. I missed you. I thought about you, but when I seen that face again, you made my day. You will always be in my heart, Payasa!

**-KickR**

**From The Beat:** Remembering is fine, but even better is getting out of here and staying free so that you can make some new memories.

## Dedicated To a Special Someone

I pull over and let the fool have it,  
see when it comes to the G life you gotta live it like a savage,  
creeping through these streets ready to wreak some havoc,  
devil's living in my heart and I got demons in the attic.  
With passion, I simultaneously represent where I'm from  
and stay smashing, different fashion.

When I'm passing, homie, ain't never laggin' ...

Girl, I'm chilling with your brother  
and I'd like to know the answer  
to the question that I'm asking: What it do?  
You don't know me and I don't know you.

I know your name.

My name's Joseph, but you could call me Smiley.  
I'm interested in meeting you.

I like my game to be blatant, but I guess you could call  
this a clue.

Locked up for robbing a store  
you locked up for hurting another in your way,  
but this is the game we play.

I like to experience how Bonnie and Clyde felt,  
so what you say?

Daffy looks like Capitan M  
and I think its hella funny hella white girls  
be jocking this tall firme vato,  
but I need a chola,

so forget them snow bunnies they're still nobodies.

I know you feel me on this cause you're not that far away,  
been locked up for a long ass minute but I still got shhh to say.

But anyways, even though I hear staff calling  
"M" every morning, I still get shhh my way,  
'cause I'm on supply and it's just another day.

To leave fools in a daze  
living in the fast lane:

Hypnotic, I'm on it like robotic economic  
my words are anonymous  
got these folks hooked on phonics  
exorbitant chronic, a binding ball that's bionic  
don't drink water that's tonic,

sombody call the doctor

I'm a bilingual talker

a nuisance to society, but I keep it proper  
keeping these other fools looking softer  
drinking martinis and eating lobster

laughing at these weenies that try to act like mobsters,

I keep it coming like clockwork,  
got these folks needing expert guidance  
to figure out why my looks are darker.

I kinda result to violence when I notice these stalkers.  
This is dedicated to someone special and I hope it stops her.

Keep your head up suaveita, smile now, smile later.  
Don't let nothing get you down. I'm out.

- Smiley

**From The Beat:** There's nothing like an old-fashioned love letter to get a girl's attention, and the level of skill you are showing here will definitely turn some heads. The best thing about writing, is that it might be inspired by a special someone but the power of words outlasts all of us. Keep writing. Sorry we had to cut a part of your piece, but we at The Beat have rules to follow too.

## Dear Baby, I'm Sorry

Dear Baby, I'm sorry I made you cry.

Dear Baby, I'm sorry I hurt your little heart.

Dear Baby, I'm sorry I couldn't be there for you.

Dear Baby, now I'm here.

So Baby, don't cry no more.

-Ronnie

**From The Beat:** Don't be sorry. Make it up to that person to show that person you really do mean what you say.

## Problems At Home

What's up Beat? Today topic that I'm writing about is the days when I don't want go home! The day that I didn't want to go home was when I was living in the shelter and there was nothing but problems with my mom and dad. They didn't get along. So I stayed at my homie house for a couple of days, and then I went home and I got some clothes and money. Then I went back to my homie house.

So that it until next time.

-Rod

**From The Beat:** It's hard on the children when parents can't get along and forget that their first responsibility is not to themselves, but to their kids. We're sorry you had to stay in a shelter because home was too difficult. What's the situation now? Are your parents still together? When you get out, who will you live with? (We can't publish your last name, so we shortened it for you.)

## Stay In My Life

The very thought of you leaving my life  
Broke me down tears

I took for granted all the love that you gave me  
I know that's what I feared

Every heartbeat, every moment, everything I see is you  
Please forgive me, I'm so sorry

Don't say were through

Girl I need you, to open up my eyes

Girl I need you, to be by my side

'Cause without you, where would I be

Yes, I need you, come back to me

A kiss is not a kiss without your lips kissing mine

You bring me paradise

I can't live if you took your love away from me,

Without you I would die

Every second, every minute, every time I close my eyes

I could feel you, so I want you to stay in my life.

-Ly

**From The Beat:** There is real power in these words of love, and we hope their power finds their mark in her heart. But if they don't — if she does not come back to you because you did whatever it was that put your love for her second — then you will have to live with this consequence. It is what we often say, that some consequences are permanent, and that unless steps are taken in time, you may be left with nothing more than "If only..." Nearly a thousand years ago, a Persian poet (now Iran) named Omar Khayyam, wrote: "The moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on: Nor at they piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, Nor all they tears wash out a word of it."

## Death is

Death is kind to he who is in pain,  
but cruel to those who mourn him.

Death is kind because it does not  
discriminate young or old,  
black or white,

rich or poor.

When mankind wages war  
death smiles

knowing that he gains new subjects  
under his power.

The greatest healer of all is  
Death.

When all others fail

it is to Him that we go.

Death is the great equalizer.

We should not fear death  
but respect Him

and know that He waits for us  
with open arms.

-Wolverine

**From The Beat:** We may not agree with you, but we admire your facility with the language.



### Starting Young

I started smoking weed when I was in elementary School. The first time I got high was out of a coca cola can. I was in 4th grade. I started drinking in the 7th grade. I remember taking a shot of some 100% Tequila from Mexico. It was the morning before school. I never made it to school.

I remember I was at my homeboy's pad. He wanted me to try thizz pill. I just wanted to try it. so I took it. I was kicking back at the house, listening to oldies. Then it hit me like a earthquake. My eyes were rolling to the back of my head. I was on one. I looked in the mirror; my pupils were hella big.

Since then, I've popped like at least one time a day. In truth I am a beer drinker, especially Tecate.

**\_Johnny**

*From The Beat: We appreciate the details in this piece, Johnny, but we are sad that you are still hooked on habits you began as a small child. While your body is growing, you're still acting like the elementary school kid who was led into drugs and alcohol, and keeps his mind from growing by not examining where these habits are taking him, and what effect they are having on his growth and development. In truth, you are killing your future. None of this is good for you, and the alcohol may be the worst of all. It's one of those drugs that seems so harmless that you can sink, little by little, into a deep hole that, when you recognize how deep you've fallen, becomes almost impossible to dig yourself out again. If you examine your life as honestly as you've done in this piece, do you see a link between your drinking and drug use and the fact that you have handed away your freedom? Is that what you want for your future?*

### Anger

When I get angry I blow up and want to fight. The person I always want to fight gets scared. That makes me more angry and I start to hit the walls.

**-Chris**

*From The Beat: We bet those walls aren't afraid of you, at all. So, shouldn't that calm you down, by your logic?*

### Sweet Revenge

Revenge is sweet  
 First you lose, now you wanna beat  
 Your blood is on heat  
 Sometimes lives is what you want to keep  
 Knock them off their feet  
 They thought it was done  
 But the funk has just begun  
 They see you, they run  
 But they're gonna get caught  
 With one that's hot  
 Revenge is flying through your mind  
 That's what leaves you blind  
 Let all your rage out  
 Just to show him what you're all about  
 Cops' sirens, you run  
 Get to kick back to have fun  
 You're chillin'  
 While the victim is thinking about killin'  
 He hits the corner buckin'  
 You're duckin'  
 As he keeps popping  
 You start dropping  
 Damn! He got you  
 Now what do you do  
 You know what get that foul  
 Revenge don't stop  
 Until your death box drop

**-Cisco**

*From The Beat: Revenge may be sweet, but it leaves behind even more grieving mothers and children and lovers. The dead are out of their pain, but the living... What do they deserve?*

### True Life

Well, I guess I can say I'm not happy to be here. But at the same time I look for the good in the bad. My dad always tells me, "What doesn't kill you will make you stronger". I can honestly say that I believe that... and then there are the things that do kill you and that instill fear in us. Within yourself, if you're not dead, you're getting stronger.

**-W**

*From The Beat: You're alive and kicking, so, if what you believe is true, you must be getting stronger. We hope so.*

### The Dream

I never forget the day I saw my angel come to save me from heaven. All my cries froze in time and my soul seemed to be free. Then I woke from my dream and it seemed to be hell. It was real and heaven couldn't save me from me.

**-Scy**

*From The Beat: At times it seems as if our dreams are the only place we find real peace. What make this world so cruel at times that we can't wait to go to sleep just to escape it fire of pain? The test is for you to pull your dreams out of your reality.*

### What Goes Around Comes Around

I am going to write about my homeboys Lefty and Speedy, RIP. They passed away. They were close friends. I was kicking it with them and all of a sudden they're gone. And I felt hella bad but I couldn't do nothing about it right there because when Lefty died, I was at the Ranch and when Speedy died, I was in here. Alrato.

**-Lil' Man**

*From The Beat: It seems like one of the hardest things to be away from your friends and community when someone dies. You have to deal with it alone, instead of celebrating the life of your friend with others who knew them. But one way to continue to celebrate them is to write about why you cared about them. A bad way to memorialize them is to try to take revenge.*

### Doing My Thing

I'm getting out the day after my birthday and I'm 'bout to be 18. Damn...It's a trip. I feel so old.  
 Well I'm getting out with almost nothing but hope. I did it on my own for a long time and now it's time to get on it and get mine. Mama's going to be working single, and legal. Damn sounds good to me.  
 I graduate this month and I'm college bound so it's time to make my way up to the top. I'll be out before this comes out so stay up.

**-Top Notch**

*From The Beat: It always feel like heaven when it's time to get out and a person can sometimes think he/she got it all figured out but when temptation arise there's not many that withstand the test. Watch out for the roadblocks because they will try to take you down.*

### Me – Here's Who I Am

I am a martial artist, no self-defense, only actual hand-to-hand fighting. I am devoted to my honor code and view the world through unbiased eyes.  
 I say what is true. I am always looking for more wisdom and strength through meditation and by pushing my body to new limits. I am a shadow, an eroded memory, so now I must meditate more on both myself and where I belong.

**-Wolverine**

*From The Beat: Are you sure you aren't a small, furry animal with a hair-trigger temper?*

**Why?**

Why do I have so much hatred?  
 I look at people with a mean mug. Why?  
 I find the need to sell drugs  
 so my baby can feed on something.  
 Don't want him to starve like a bum on crack. Why?  
 Hooked on drugs: marijuana and cocaine.  
 Once I have it, I look for it and need it  
 like a stray dog lookin for a peace of meat. Why?  
 Lord, tell me why you give us life  
 but you take my dawgs like the wind. Why?  
 I take for granted another day,  
 knowing that tomorrow isn't promised.  
 Lord, tell me why?  
 Hatred, death, murder, drugs.  
 Lord, I don't want to be a victim  
 of these streets.  
 Please, tell me why.

**- Schitzo "The Boss"**

**From The Beat:** This piece reads like a prayer someone would be saying before they go to sleep, it has that honesty and rawness that comes in a personal moment with God. Thank you so much for sharing it. Anyone who has had a "why" moment will relate.

**Boring Day**

Damn Beat. I had a boring day. I'm chillin' with my home girl Ronnie. We are in the classroom cracking each other. I said to her there was boogers in her nose. She picked it and wiped it on me! How sick! Anyways, I'm bored! my girl is waiting for me. I miss her smile already. Her sexy kisses, makes me feel all tingly. I'm out.

**- No Name**

**From The Beat:** You can say love can sometimes be nasty. There's nothing like goofing off with a friend on a boring day.

**Lost A Home Boy**

I found out while I've been locked up that my homeboy got shot up and he died. I found that he got shot three times, twice in the chest and once in the head. I guess the people came from around the corner hit him up and got him. My other homie ran and left my homeboy, ... them fools. Why didn't they get shot? But I know that my homeboy is in a better place with that struggle off his face. Me and him we're like brothers. Rest in peace Lil' Y g.

**-Chino**

**From The Beat:** Hearing about a situation like this when you are locked up is especially hard because you can only imagine the situation that happened to your friend and how you might have reacted if you were there. Don't be too hard on your other friends, though, they are probably feeling especially bad.

**Baby, I'm For Real**

"It's been too long, and I'm lost without you,  
 What am I gonna do?  
 Said I'm needing you, wanting you.  
 Wondering if you're the same  
 And who's been with you?...  
 Is your heart still mine?  
 I wanna hold you tight...I miss you" - Aalijah Lyrics

Baby I want you to know that I love you and I miss you so much. I think about you every day. Even though you and I aren't together at the time, you will always be in my heart. Baby, I'm for real about you and our relationship. I want you to know that I care for you deeply. You have my heart...always have, always will. I don't want anybody but you. You are my one and only love Sephina. I want you to trust me girl. I want you to realize that I truly want to be with you. Whatever I have to do to make this work, I will do. I will bend over backwards for you in the name of love. As long as I can help it, I will never hurt you. I love you with all my heart! Nothing or no one could stand in my way of loving you. I want you so bad right now, you have no idea. I just wish you were here with me so I could tell you how much you mean to me. Together or not baby, I will be right here holding it down for you, off top. That's my word. You are not replaceable and I will never make an attempt to find someone new.

"You should let me love you  
 let me be the one to  
 Give you everything you want & need  
 Baby good love and protection  
 Make me your selection  
 Show you the way love suppose to be  
 Let me love you." - Mario Lyrics

So that's all I got to say Beat. That I love and miss my ex Sephina. I'll holler another time. I'm ghost.

**-Cupcake**

**From The Beat:** Change is never easy to accept. Sometimes we want things to stay the same and never change. Hardly that ever happens in this life we live in. We hope you'll once reconcile with your ex but if not the world is full of different flavors ready to put a rainbow smile on your face.

**The Stranger**

The stranger that tried to help me was on the light rail one day. At first he just started preaching to me and I was hella high. So I looked at him and I was like "Ay man, no disrespect or nothing but I am hella high." He said, "I know. That's why I am preaching to you." Then I said, "Right, but you got to slow down because you're talking too fast." Then out of the cuts that foo' asked for my number. I was like "Naw, I don't have one." That shhh trip me out because then that foo' was hella looking at me from the corner of his eye. But yea that was it. Then I was just hoping my cell phone didn't ring.

**-Polecat**

**From The Beat:** This is a funny scene that you really bring to life in just these few sentences. It seems like he might not have wanted to help you in the long run.

**Love Will Always Stay**

Baby, I'm your ride or die  
 for so many reasons why.  
 The things we do at nighttime,  
 what we cannot say,  
 the things we do  
 in a clandestine way.  
 I'll be the guy you can lean on  
 when you cry  
 because you always told the truth  
 and not a lie.  
 Always loyal by my side  
 that's some of the reason why  
 and even though we're miles away  
 my love for you will always stay.

**- Chris**

**From The Beat:** This is a beautiful poem, especially the lines: "The things we do at nighttime/ what we cannot say / the things we do / in a clandestine way." You have a great way of expressing your emotions with words. This will get you far in life, both with the ladies and professionally.

### In Hell You Shall Pay

"In Hell you shall pay"  
 Ha, but that's my way  
 I'm feeling different, not the same  
 It hit my lungs and my brain  
 Two more hits to reload  
 This stuff has me on silent mode  
 Trying to get life's code  
 Soon I'll figure it out  
 Doing it alive is what I doubt  
 Well, until my paper has sex with the lead  
 I'll see you later or should I say write you later instead

**-Cisco**

**From The Beat:** Maybe there's nothing to figure out... Maybe living because you're alive is all there is to figure. Or, maybe there are great mysteries to be solved. We don't know the answer to that question ("Life's Meaning") any more than you. But one thing we do know: We look forward to the next time your paper has sex with the lead.

### Back Again

I guess things can change like that. I thought I was doing good. Well, I was doing good and then I decided to not go home. I kept putting it off and putting it off. And then my friend's aunt had came home and I guess she didn't want us to be there because she was hella mad. She was screaming and yelling at us. I didn't know she didn't want me there. She called the cops and sent them to my house and I was on house arrest, so I knew I was screwed. I had to sneak home because I had things on me that I didn't want to get new charges for. So the cops came and said we were messing up her house and throwing up in her backyard, which wasn't true. And now I'm doing three months in rehab. It was either that or the Ranch.

**-Eddie**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes parties can get totally out of control and it is so hard to go home. How do you judge situations that you are in and decide to get out of there before you get into trouble? Figuring that out will solidify your plans to "do good."

### Time For Me To Move On

It's always been natural for me to lie to people that everything's OK, when I'm really going through hard times. Times only get harder when I start believing my own lies and come to the realization that things are really messed up. This happened to me with my man.

I finally am coming to the realization that it's time to grow up and move on to bigger and better things. He played his games and told his lies. His true colors were sadly shown to me after almost a year. And I'm not going to lie. I played my games too and shed my tears with him. It's not worth it. Maybe if he cared it would be a different story. But he only cares about himself.

So ladies: Do your own thing, make your money, and don't shed no tears for no dude. I'm out.

**-No More Tears**

**From The Beat:** It's always about you first. Never let that simple reality be the reason you harvest negative activity towards the other gender and persuade other girls to allow thorns to grow in their backyard when their grounds are cut out for a rose.

### Happy Birthday To Me

Freedom's just around the corner and so is my 40 oz. of Mickey's and my Patron. Damn, I can't wait. I'm thirsty already.

**-Birthday Girl**

**From The Beat:** Being intoxicated has always been a man/woman's downfall. How do you succeed if your vision is always blurry?

### Dedicated To The One I love

As time races by, I'm still longing  
 to look in your big brown beautiful eyes.  
 What I would do to just hold you  
 in my arms.  
 But all I can do is  
 just pray that your out of harms way.  
 Baby Boy I love you and that  
 ain't no lie  
 We're together 'til the end  
 and I hope your feelings are the same as mine.  
 I reminisce on the good 'n' bad we had together and all I  
 can do is cry cause this feeling in me hurts  
 and I feel like I'm about to die.  
 My baby ain't here wit me,  
 especially through these hard times  
 And I can't be there for him  
 to hold you in my arms 'n' say  
 "Baby, everything's going to be alright. I'm here for you  
 always 'n' forever

but it's a two way street I'm going to hold it down for you 'n' be there to support you in every thing. You are my everything, and my love is devoted to you my one and only.

I love you even if I do have to express my love to you through The Beat Within.

I love you monkey and I'm for real and I haven't hidden any secrets and have nothing to hide.

**-Lil' Slick's Baby Mama**

**From The Beat:** We hope your love will one day have a chance to blossom with this special one. It seems like your words is sincere and your actions have a chance of following its path.

### Stranger

I'm in here for a gun charge, but a homeboy like me ain't trippin off time. It's part of the life I chose! But back on topic, one time I was hella drunk and the bus driver gave me a free ride. It was greatly appreciated because I could've got a "drunk in public."

Well, I'm gonna go for now. To all in this juvi and in other cities, stay up, this ain't shhh compared to those doing life in the pen. To that bus driver, thank you, and to The Beat thanks because your program gives me extra time out of my cell. "Late!"

**-Tiny**

**From The Beat:** Sometimes the kindness of strangers is the most beautiful thing that can happen in this world. Do you think one day you'll remember that bus driver and do a similar act of kindness?

### A song

Finally somebody let me out of my cage.

Now time for me is nothing 'cause I'm counting no age.

Now, I couldn't be there.

Now, you shouldn't.

I'm good at repairs and I'm under each snare.

I bet you didn't think so

but I command you to

pick and chose

sit and loose

all you different crews.

chicks and dudes-

Who do you think

is really kicken tunes?

**-Ags**

**From The Beat:** We give up - who?

### The Latino Strangers!

I remember when I was driving my 82 I-Roc Camaro by Silver Creek High School. When my car started to overheat, the engine got so hot I had to pull over.

After about five minutes of cussing at the car, some Latinos came up to me and asked me if I needed any help. So, I asked if they could help me push my car to my cousin's house. So, we started to push my car. After we were done, I said thanks and they left. A couple of days later, I found out they were my brother's boys! So, strangers can be generous!

**-Green Eyes**

**From The Beat:** *If they had been in position, would you have helped them the same way they helped you? In life in order to receive, you have to give. So don't forget to return the favor to anybody who needs it. You were lucky!*

### A Night At Las Animas

One day, I didn't want to go home was when my pops was tweeking with his homies. I didn't want to go home because I didn't want to see my pops getting jacked. Instead, I jacked a bottle and walked to the park with my homies. I got so faded that I don't remember what happened. All I remember is telling my homies I was gonna walk home.

I woke up to the sound of my homie telling me "ay get up homeboy what happened? You got rushed." I stumbled to my feet. I only got from one side of the park to the other and I passed out. My brother carried me to my other brother's pad. I will always remember that, who knows what would've happened if he didn't find me.

**-King D**

**From The Beat:** *Who knows! We understand you, we also wouldn't like to be witness of a horrible scene created by the influence of drugs. Now, you need to stop worrying about your father and worry about yourself. You are very young and have a whole life to live and to enjoy. Some people start messing up their lives by drinking and end up shooting up drugs through their neck veins. You don't want to belong from that list. Do you? Get out and try to help him. If you can't ignore what's around you, and do your best moving getting a job, moving out from there and start your own life. There are many who have been in your same situation and have made it. You can make it as well. Trust us!*

### Eyes of a Killer

**-Rio**

**From The Beat:** *After giving it some thought, in the best interest of our program, we are going to hold back your poem. We would have considered publishing your work if there was a moral, a lesson to teach us readers. We know oh too well the violence that plagues many writers, we now need you to step up and teach while creating!*

### Life... 2

Like how I said in my last piece, how life's a hell, not to trust anyone, not to let love blind you, and that if the risk's worth it, take it. All this I think applies to everyone in this world.

All we got is our balls, our word and we shouldn't break them for anyone. Stay true, live life, don't let it live you.

For me, what I learned is that you gotta do it for yourself and to never give up. Keep your head up always. Do what you gotta do to maintain. The best thing you can do is to move forward with a purpose, appreciate every day as much as you can. Keep your heads up, late.

**-Celoso**

**From The Beat:** *Great! You've gave us good advice! But they are not specific enough to give us ideas of what we should really do to make it happen in life. What can we do? What exactly are you recommending us to do? To go to school? Get a good education? Get a job? You said something about to do what we gotta do to maintain? Maintain what?*

### To Scrwed Up To Go Home

Q-Vole! Well the days I didn't want to go home was when I was hella screwed up, drunk, high, bein' crazy off that devil's drug if you know what I mean. Sometime I would get so screwed up, I would forget what they called me.

**-Lil' Man**

**From The Beat:** *Sounds more like you become a zombie, given how messed up you become. You cannot afford to pollute your body with drugs and drink any longer, the system has a hold of you and will make sure your life remains miserable, if you continue to put the devil's drug into your spirit and mind.*

### Home Is The Hall

To The Beat: There was a time when I didn't want to go home. It was when I got locked up. I have a good family, but it was hard to see the pain in my loved one. The environment wasn't that good, the only time I went home was to help and protected my loved one.

The cops are shady and they don't care about anyone. When the cops would try to mess with my family, I would come home. All I care about is my family. I failed all my programs for them and their safety.

Now I want to go home but I did some messed up things so this might be my home for now. So for all you lil ones, go home before it's too late and this becomes your home. Late.

**-Lil' Man**

**From The Beat:** *This pain that make you feel bad was created by you. Do you know that? If you really care for them, show it with good action and not just words. We can understand that you wanted to be there when things get complicated at home, but the way you are handling things is not proper way to look for solutions. If you really want to be there for them, do your program, be a different person, and be at home where you belong and where they need you. That's the best way to make things better.*

### Waiting For Revenge

Time in here goes by so slow. I'm waiting to go to another unit, but it's taking so long. My homie just got out of the hospital. He was in critical condition.

When I get out, I'm gonna get revenge but in the good way like living it up that my homie lived. There's no one to get revenge on 'cause it's both their fault. Well gotta go see you later keep your head up.

**-Froggy**

**From The Beat:** *Are you trying to say that your revenge will consist in living a good and normal life? Just remember what really revenge brings. All it brings is more blood spreading, and tear shedding. Do the right thing using your brain.*

### The Very Kind Stranger

On January 28, 2008, was the day I got arrested. I was locked up for about a month when a staff who works at the visiting place, let my sisters and aunts to come in and gave me a hug when they weren't supposed to.

That man was very kind to my family and I, because he could see in my face the expression how much I miss my sisters. So he was kind enough to let them pass through the doors and give me hugs even though it was for less than a couple min. I really appreciated that, because he put his job on the line for me. I will always remember this staff even though I don't remember his name. Well that's about it The Beat.

**-Popeye**

**From The Beat:** *Damn sure he did a good thing! What do you think made him do that? If you had been him, would you have done the same thing to someone in the same position? Why? We would appreciate it if for the next time, you can write about the questions before this sentence. Can you?*

### Sitting, Thinkin'

Once again, what's up Beat? I've been good. What good Beat? I'm thinking about what to say. I've been locked up in downtown San Jose.

In my first time in a cell, I wasn't feeling too well. My life hasn't changed, making mistake over and over. I just want to get out, leave the drugs and try to be sober. I want to live my life not the way I'm going.

I'm sitting in my cell not knowing what to do. Thinking of my homies and how they're doing too.

When I get out, I'm gonna try to turn my life around, and look up to the Big Man that created the sky and the ground to help me make the right choices and do the same to the homies I love. I pray their lives will be accepted up above. Until till the end, this is my beat within.

**-Lil' L**

**From The Beat:** This is what's called, "reflection." You're on the right track. You should help yourself out first and then think about helping others. Think about positive things and don't worry about what your homies are doing or not doing. Worry about what can you do to have a better future, how to maintain yourself free, about how to help those who really need you. There are many other things you should be thinking about. Ignore thinking about your homies for a min and think about your life and the way it's going. Can you do that for your own good?

### All Bad

What up Beat, it's Young Outlaw coming from this unit! Well I ain't feeling any topics because I got some bad news today!

Well like thirty- minutes ago my PO wants to send me to county when I turn 19! Well I'm 18 years old stuck in Juvl for violations. My PO is trying to give me six months and I get sentenced on the 25th so that means I won't get out 'till September! And my b-day is in July so ima have to do two months in county! Which I ain't really tripping but I don't want to get my adult career started! Damn, and my girl tripping off my baby's momma, so I ain't doing too good!

**-Young Outlaw**

**From The Beat:** The Outlaw life is not paying off. Change the name, do your time, get out and stay out of the system, and retire from a life of pain. Work on you, take care of your child and your family!

### If I Get In A Fight

What up Beat, it's your boy!  
well when I get in a fight  
I came home  
my mom and dad find out I got in a fight.  
They don't care  
It's like they don't care if I get in a fight,  
they don't care I guess.

**-I care**

**From The Beat:** Why do you suppose they don't care? Do you care? How much do you care about bettering yourself? Tell us!

### Just Saying

I represent that dime in my neighborhood mind.  
Why is it a crime  
to say what's on your mind?  
Telling them cops the truth about how shady they are,  
not to sound crazy but it's the hard life that made me.  
You can hate if you want, just give respect and that all  
get back.

**- Scy**

**From The Beat:** The freedom of speech is just something written down under our 1st amendment but is punish more often for be exercised. Freedom of speech is something of the past and is being murdered every day by this new world order.

### The Cage

The cage is where I live, sleep, and eat in and not by choice.

It's cold, lonely and no human should have to suffer that.

Time goes by slow, real slow,  
so all you do is sit and think about what you could have done different to not get caught up. You think about everything, your family, your friends, brothers, sisters, girlfriend...  
what could they be doing right now (something you're not)

but who knows 'cause you're in your cage.

**-Bailey**

**From The Beat:** After all this time thinking, have you gotten to a conclusion? Do you like being in this cage? Can you think about all this when being free? What's the key to be release from this cage? Can you earn it?

### Victims of Pain

You speak of nothing but lies.  
Nor felt the anger, vengeance, violence and hatred I've felt.

This life has penetrated but still few face many.  
For in my heart lied glory because of the life I've lived.  
Darkness is my friend, my dying angel will bring harm,  
but I am comfortable.

To me it's a charm.  
I continue to contradict myself between purity and evil.  
The words I speak to the world will always stay lethal.  
I'm a weapon and my life is a war, so walk with me if you want to win.

In my kingdom I can't explain, only these words - victims of pain.

If you shoot me in a dream you better wake up and apologize.

The only thing I'm looking for is the death in your eyes.  
Yeah, I got to breath, but it's my last one left.

**-Jesse**

**From The Beat:** Who are you talking to in this dark angry piece? Who doesn't understand what you have been through? Break it down Jesse!

### It's All Good

People say I am no good,  
because I am always in my hood,  
trying to stay out of trouble,  
but no matter what it just doubles.

I got to keep my mind straight,  
make sure everything's ok, it's all good, it's understood,  
I'm keeping it strong, I know I could, got no problems or no worries my focus never gets blurry.

**-Trillo**

**From The Beat:** So trouble you find in the hood, regardless, what must you do to stay clean of problems? You got it, stay away from the negatives in hood, unless you thrive for trouble, incarceration and sadness.

### The Bus Stop

The only time I met a stranger is at a bus stop. When I was at the bus stop, I didn't even have a bus pass so he was cool enough to let me use his day pass just to let a mack get his way through. So that is the only time I met a stranger.

**-Tongan**

**From The Beat:** Would you do the same for a stranded person at the bus stop? Hope so.

## Loss, Revenge, Forgiveness

I never lost someone close to me, but growing up in Oakland I seen plenty of lives taken. I witnessed plenty of murders and it ain't a pretty sight. It stank. The bodies get dumb ass deformed fast. And the family be coming out screaming. But the worst thing to see is someone being stabbed to death and the family is the ones who suffering the most. So it heavyweight sucks.

It's also good in the hood cause that's how life goes, but it's up to you to stay safe and watch your surroundings. But my visit took up most times, and now The Beat is out of here. So I gotta cutt. So peace out.

**-Young Sha T**

**From The Beat: We apologize you had to live such a troubled life experiencing things you simply maybe would have not experienced in the suburbs. Let this experience be your 3rd eye and give you all the insight you need to stand whatever crosses your path.**

## The Stranger

I been with my stranger going on 8 months. I remember when I first seen him I walked in the San Jose Community (School) and it was my first day. I seen someone sitting in there looking hella mad and mean. He was getting suspended for that day.

When I get my schedule, I started to walk to my class and the lil homeboy says, "Damn. You have hella white teeth", and I just laughed and the mean guy told him: "Come on Ninja you don't say that." I just left and little did I know me and my mean guy have been in love for eight months going on 'til the end. I love you baby and I'm devoted to you.

**- Stranger's girl**

**From The Beat: A mean guy is only cool when he's gentle to his woman. The flip side is a man and his attitude paints his picture for the world to see. Would you say your mean guy is a good look?**

## Triple Life Sentence

I never wanted to go home because my mom always looked sad. She was always talking about how her brother, "my uncle," got a triple life sentence. She has recently overcome and got used to my uncle's sentence. Now I go home a lot and we have a really good bond! So that is why I never went home.

**-Green Eyes**

**From The Beat: Maybe the fact that you weren't home made her days more depressive. How do you think she feels knowing that you are going to the same direction your uncle went? It's time you start thinking about her feelings. She's your mother and she doesn't deserve this. You should be support to her in all ways not another problem. She needs your help and your presence.**

## Got A Ride

What up Beat! It's your homeboy Nino. How you guys holding up? I ran from the Ranch last December, and I really didn't know how to get back to my city, Sunnyvale. So I asked a stranger for money. He was a homeboy and I used the money to use a pay phone.

My homeboy called his mom and her boyfriend picked us up from one side of San Jose. So my homeboy's stepdad gave me a ride to Santa Clara and I took the bus.

Yeah she was happy to see me and knew I ran. Yet she let me stay the night at her house, I played, and I ate a lot. Well I'm out, late.

**-Nino**

**From The Beat: Likely, you got to your destination safe, but was it worth running from your program? What did you get in return? If you hadn't run from your program, would you be here or out?**

## My Family

I've been locked up for about two months. I always wonder how my family is doing and if anything is happening to them right now. That's why it sucks to be in here, because I hate thinking and wondering if anything bad is happening to them right now.

**-Sh**

**From The Beat: If it sucks to be here, why are you here? Please help us understand this question. Why?**

## A Stranger Girl

What's cracking Beat? I got to tell you one time I met a stranger. I was downtown in St. James Park. I was supposed to get picked up from my mom, but my cell phone was dead.

I was hella mad just when it started to sprinkle. So I see this one white girl, she was texting so I ask her if I can borrow her phone. I thought she would be hating. So I called my mom, then my mom said that she was on her way.

So, I'm bored, so I get into my LL Cool J Cupcake mode. Her name was Marissa. Man I spit vicious game on her easy. Next thing you know, she finds me on Myspace. She leaves comments, and then we swap digits. After that, I'm thinking to myself, that's bad business. So she used to stay texting me and e-mailing me.

Then we got drunk at her pad once, and we were buzzing. When I sobered up, I checked my phone. My boy wanted to hit this lick, so I dip and left, then got caught. But out of the cuts, she writes me. She be talking about those love fairy tails, so I don't know Beat!

**-Gadsden**

**From The Beat: Maybe she's part of your destiny. Write her back. Maybe she can be the person that can make you change and keep you out of trouble. Get out and give yourself a better life!**

## Grandma

When my grandma pasted away, I felt lost and sad. She was like my second mom. She understood everything I went through. Or at least, I think she did.

She was on my side through good and bad times. She was always giving me good advice on what to do now and in the future. I miss going to church on Sundays even though I didn't want to, but she always made it fun.

I think part of the reason I do the things I do or did is because I lost part of my mind when she pasted. But I don't use that as an excuse because I know that she doesn't want me to be locked up. RIP. Lillian Ligon(Nana) see you when I get there. Shhh if I do.

**-Cravin**

**From The Beat: We're sorry for your loss. Like you said, don't take this loss as excuse to mess up your life. Wherever she might be, she might be wishing you the best hating to see you here. It's time to wake up and stop acting like a child. You are growing up and becoming a man. Start acting like one, like the one your grandmother would have loved to see.**

## Random

I wonder what is going on with my family. I have been away for so long I barely remember anything. It has been a year now.

They are planning to send me to a group home for another year. I can't do that. What do you think Beat?

**-AnonymousOne**

**From The Beat: Whether you like it or not, you are not in the hands of the system, and the only way to step off from it is by doing your programs. There's nothing you can do, but to agreed and follow their rules until you accomplish your program.**

### Those Days

Walking through the hood slowly tryna' clear my mind,  
Flag raised high so if rivals cross the border I won't be  
hard to find,

Some say I'm looking for trouble  
But the truth is I have nowhere to go,  
Too much drama at the pad

So the calles is all I came to know.  
I'm not running from my problems  
Just trying to release my frustration,

Sometimes I need to feel alive  
So that can explain all the chances that I'm taking,  
My life I be risking at times

Just to take my mind off the shhh,  
But after all these altercations  
I still can't take my mind off of it,

Catch me walking down the block  
all alone,

This is what we do on  
"The days we don't want to go home,"  
They say we're looking for trouble

But we have nowhere to go,  
They label us menaces to society,  
But about us, how much do they know?

**-Shotgun**

**From The Beat:** It doesn't help when you reinforce what they "the system" labels you. Put down the guns. Leave the lifestyle and the labels disappear. It's on you! Get your act together go to school and see what they say about the new man you have become. It takes courage. Forget blaming the pad and the hood, now it's time to take responsibility.

### Always Running

One time, I was fiending for the clavo (dope) and this one guy gave me some. We were peaking, then we seen some rivals and we always run, so we ran. We were so messed up on drugs, we were running so fast, it was crazy. Our homies say we look like sucked up rodents. We all look the same, tall, skinny, short, sometimes even fat, but always looking gacked. Speaking Spanish hella fast, and we always think we're hard, but when it comes down to it, the rivals always see us run. Anyways, we were running for our lives, and barely got away, 'cause this stranger let us get in his car, and drove off. We became cool after that and always chilled.

**-Lil' D'**

**From The Beat:** Sounds pretty serious. If this is not a joke piece, you need serious help for a drug problem that will kill you. As for the gang, sounds like it's best to turn in your belt and start a new life. What fun is running? What fun is worrying about getting beat and having to always look over your shoulder? In the best interest of the program we have also taken out all the names in this piece as well as yours!

### Ired

I'm tired of having to take a crap up on the steel toilet. I'm tired of having to buzz in just to ask for something and pushing this damn button. I can't wait to get out of this facility and grow up to be a man. Yes, that I should be. I wanna graduate high school, and become somebody. I don't have to be anybody's counselee.

I want to grow up just like my destiny. She's my world and she's my everything. She's almost 18. I want to her to give me her eyes, so I can see what I'm doing wrong in my life. I can't wait to get out, get in a new school, and earn some points for completing a sudoku.

**-P-nut**

**From The Beat:** Do you know the meaning of being man? What do you think it takes to become one? But you know what, graduating could be the first step. What's the next after high school? You got a lot to prove, what are you waiting for? You don't need another person's eyes, in order to view the things you are doing wrong. Stop denying the reality!

### I'd Rather Kick It Than Go Home

There are days that I don't want to go home. Most of the time I'm kickin it with my home boys from my block or posted in the park, you know. We all kick it at that park, drink, smoke, pop pills, but never smoke shhh. It's hella cool over there, we post, start a bonfire, hella chill.

Sometimes I be going to different cities like to San Jose, Redwood City, San Francisco, stay there all night drunk or high, sometimes even thizzin'.

But being locked up sucks and that's a fact so I'm gonna lay low on the drugs and just kick back, chill with my boys and smoke some cigarettes.

When I get out of the Ranch, I got a plan to go to school and do good so I can stay out, 'cause if you think 'bout it, in the long term, you make more money the right way. That's it for now....

**-Carlos**

**From The Beat:** How do you define doing good? Can you stay away from drinking and poppin' pills? Hope so, if not, you do need help! If your boys are true friends they will support your effort to doing good, otherwise, you definitely have your work cut out.

### Descancen En Paz (Rest In Peace)

G-vole Beat what's cracking? Well this is Stomper back again to write about two important people in my life that passed away.

One of those two people was my little sister. She passed away about years ago, at a very young age and since that day it just hasn't been the same for me. It is hard to know that she is gone. That same day I got to play with her, was the last time.

The other person is my homie. He passed away in the year '07. What makes it hard is that I didn't get to see him, but I did get to talk to him about a week before he passed.

I was here in the hall when it happened and I just couldn't believe it. That day my tia (auntie) came to visit me, she broke down crying and gave me the bad news. Until this day, I still can't believe he's gone and I don't know if I can accept that they are gone.

In loving memory of Delia A. Rdz & Juan Carlos M.

**-Stomper**

**From The Beat:** We are sorry for your losses. It must have been very hard and sad for you and for your family to loose a child at this age. You need to find a way to realize that they are gone and in maybe in a better place than here. Would your life have been a different one if any or both were alive? What would be different? Whether you like it or not, they are no longer here, and you need to accept that. Now, you got a life to live and the way you life will be your choice. How do you want to live yours?

### Retaliation

How do I feel when I lose a homeboy?

I feel anger rushin' through my veins.

And at the same time, it's sad to lose that homeboy. My first thought is retaliation, getting back a life for a life, that's what I've been brought up to know, not thinking if I end up in death row.

Did that punk have the right to do this, to take my homeboy's life?

I guess he did, I mean we're all in the same game.

Is this the path that my homeboy chose?

**-H'man**

**From The Beat:** Do you have the right to take another life because he took another life? What does that make you? What's your path? Every action has a consequence. We are sure that if you were in the shoes of any of those who are doing life in a cell, you wouldn't think the way you do. It's easy to say it, but hard to live it.

## Untitled

One time me my brother and all my friends were practicing for my cousin's Quinseanera at my pad and we decided to get drunk. After my brother and my friend went and stole two bottles. My brother went all crazy trying to find it and his dumb-ass asked my mom if she took it so she found out we were drinking. I got mad and started telling him shhh and cussing him out, because my mom was all mad at us.

**-Angry drunk**

**From The Beat:** When drinking people do things that may not seem right, but it appears to us that it was a blessing that your mom found out. What did she do? Not sure if the drinking has slowed down, but, look where you sit tonight!

## The Stranger

I remember when I went to Milpitas and when it was time to come back I found out that the bus wasn't running so I had to walk all the way to the great mall and on the way some one pulled over and gave me a ride, that's my stranger story.

**-Nomac**

**From The Beat:** So, some stranger pulls over and says, "hop on in"? What made you trust this person?

## The Days When I Don't Want To Go Home

What's cracking Beat? This is Troubles. I'm going to tell you a story about when I didn't want to go home. See, there was this one time when I ran from the James' Boys Ranch back in January of 2007.

Well, I knew that the Mountain View cops would be looking for me 'cause they hate me with a passion. So a few weeks passed and I was in the 'hood almost daily during those weeks.

One day I was with my sister and my homeboy, when I get a call from my other homeboy saying he had weed. The thing was that he was in my apartment, so I was like, "well, I've been out for a minute, they ain't looking for me anymore."

When I get there, this fool had a little ass nug not even a dime. We start walking out the apartments and we barely get across the street when an undercover pulls up and starts chasing me. I ran for a cool minute, but they ended up catching me. I went to alternative and got failed, so now I'm gonna get out in August 27th, my birthday. I'm 'bout to be 19 when I get out and you know it's gonna be popping. Well stay up and stay solid.

**-Troubles**

**From The Beat:** When you said, "it's gonna be popping," in your last sentence, what exactly do you mean? Are you saying that you will continue walking through your old paths? You know damn well where that will lead you. Do you? Peep this: Life is only one, and when you loose it, it's over. You can't be running away from your problems. You create your own problems and you should get rid of the, but not running away from them. They will always hunt you, if you run away from them.

## NEW MEXICO

## Confusion about growing up

It's hard growing up, ya know.

Taking the right path, but which is the right? Which is the wrong?

Peer pressure,

bad neighborhood, and bad thoughts.

Parents try their hardest to do

what they pray and hope will help,

but that is not everything.

You need the support from every one around you.

**-Desiree**

**From The Beat:** You are right Desiree, you do need the help of every one around you. You are old enough to know right from wrong, if it's against the law it's wrong, period. As a parent, that's all we can do is pray and hope for the best for our children.

*I didn't talk to anybody or see any of my family members for like a whole year.*

## What A Turn Around

Ugh! Every time I mess up I don't want to go home and face my family, P.O. or the Judge. Yeah it's my fault for messing up, but it's the hardest thing to do, you know face the truth, face the consequences.

That's the main reason I never turn myself in, until this weekend. What a turn around. I messed up on drug court, I know it took me four days to gain the courage to turn myself in, but I did it. Yeah I have to accept and deal with the consequences, but it's all good, it's all working out for me now.

**-Desiree**

**From The Beat:** Running from your problems only makes them worse. Facing your problems will help you deal, solve and better understand them. You have just taken the first step in getting the help you need, put your faith in the Drug Court Team and let them help you. In the end you will be grateful for the help you received.

## This Loss

When I lost my aunt Rose I felt like I was lost in a desert with nothing of mine, she meant the world to me. Did she have to go? She was only 28 when she passed away.

I didn't talk to anybody or see any of my family members for like a whole year.

To this day it hurts to think of her even just to look at her pictures. RIP Rose, missing my aunt day and night. Love you lots.

Never give up on your own life!

**-Christine**

**From The Beat:** We at the Beat are not sure if your last comment is from your aunt or from you, but either way it is a correct one. Don't ever give up on your own life. Learn from your mistakes to better your life.

## I Can Change

Sitting here locked up  
Not knowing what to do  
I shouldn't run  
Can't believe this is true

Thinking of my daughter  
As days passing by  
"Where's mommy at?"  
She's wondering why

Waiting to go to court  
What's the judge gonna say?  
Don't want to stay here  
Can't spend another day

Tired of doing bad  
Want to do what's right  
I can change  
But I'll have to fight

**-Amber**

**From The Beat:** You can change, but first you must want that change. If you don't want it no matter how much counseling or therapy you get nothing will help until you want the help. One main thing to think about is your daughter; it's not just about you anymore.



*Never leave the one you love for the one you like because the one you like might leave you for the one they like.*

**Wondering**

Every hour I think and wonder,  
hoping that I could go home,  
hoping my mom won't shed that tear.  
No space for me to be free,  
wishing I could just walk out that door.  
Looking at the four corners in my room  
gots me wondering if I'll be a ghost soon.  
gots my eyes closed tight,  
thinking about the history of my  
childhood life.

**-Robert**

**From The Beat:** No, you will not be a 'ghost' soon. You'll get another chance and when you do, make sure that flesh and blood and those bones and brain of yours do the right thing. We know you don't want to return to juvy, no matter how good the food is.

**On What I'm Afraid of**

I fear the cops. They harass you if they know you are on probation. They harass me every time they see me and they give me a hard time.

They always talk shhh to me and put me down. That's what I'm afraid of.

**-Aaron**

**From The Beat:** We're sorry for the frustration and anger that situation causes you. Many people find themselves in trouble by simply being "in the wrong place at the wrong time". You can avoid having to deal with misguided harassment by staying completely clear from that environment. Given enough time without trouble, this will no longer be a fearful conflict.

**On What I'm Afraid of**

I fear losing my family because they are always there for me. If I lose my mom or dad, I will go crazy because I love my mom with all of my heart. My dad tells me to do good, but I don't do it. I feel bad about that. When I get out, I'm going to do good.

**-mom and dad's child**

**From The Beat:** You are so fortunate to have a family that loves you and expects good things from you. Use that regret that you feel for your past actions to change your future. Your family will be on your side and proud again when you show them that you have really changed. You can do it.

**Help, Please...**

I need God's help for this one.

Today I got some really bad news from my attorney. She said that I was being charged with a crime that I didn't even do.

I'm going to leave it in God's hands. I'm going to pray to God that they drop the charge so I can go home and be with my family and friends. Please help me, God.

**-Osvaldo**

**From The Beat:** We don't know what kind of help you can count on from higher sources, but you can help yourself by providing your attorney with all the information you have - and by understanding your case inside and out. Good luck.

**On How I'm Going to Change When I Get Out of Here**

I'm going to change by having a part time job. I have to apply somewhere. I'm going to keep showing up at school everyday and stay after school to do work. I will probably go to the Evening Center. I will go home early. I'm going to stop possessing illegal things. I will stop smoking marijuana and have a clean test. I will check in with my P.O. weekly.

**-Fernando**

**From The Beat:** It sounds like you are on the right track. You know exactly what you have to do to get your life in order. Good for you! Now put this plan into action and don't look back.

**Live As If....**

Well, I see people always thinking that they are going to die; that they are not going to live the next day. So I always say: live your life like it's your last and always live your life to the fullest with no regrets. Why regret something you have already done- just live on with your life.

Also, don't be thinking you're better than anyone else- just be yourself. Never leave the one you love for the one you like because the one you like might leave you for the one they like.

**-Jason**

**From The Beat:** Living each day to the fullest is good advice, however looking at the regret that we feel for mistakes that we have made can be useful. Regret can teach us important lessons so we don't make the same mistakes again. You can use these lessons to move ahead and reach important goals. Yes, make the most of each day and appreciate the special people in your life, but don't forget to plan for a long, healthy life.



## Los Días Que No Quiero Ir A Casa

No quiero ir a mi casa porque todos los días fumo mariguana y no quiero que me vea mi jefita. Luego no quiero verla llorar.

Cuando no voy a casa, me quedo a dormir en las casas de los homies, pero me siento diferente. No es como estar en tu casa con tu jefita. Ella es la única persona en quien confío todos mis problemas. Por eso, la extraño un chingo. A lo mejor en esta semana salgo.

**From The Beat: ¿O sea que prefiere que tu madre derrame más lágrimas que ir a tu casa? Te aseguramos que tu madre preferieras que llegaras como llegaras, pero que durmieras en tu casa. Tú no sabes como sufren al no saber donde estan sus hijos. No seas cruel con tu madre por algo que no te llebara a nada bueno.**

## The Days I Don't Want To Go Home

I don't want to go home because I smoke weed every day and I don't want my mother to see me. I don't want to see her cry.

When I don't go home, I stay in my friend's house where I feel different. It's not like being at home with your mother. She's the only one who I share all my problems with. That's why I miss her a lot. Maybe I get out this week.

-Cn, Santa Clara

**From The Beat: So, you prefer that your mother shed more tears than going home? We are sure that your mother wishes you to come home at any state of influence, than not coming at all. You don't know how much they suffer not to know where their kids are. Don't be cruel with your mother for something that won't take you to anything good.**

## Buena Noticia

Por primera vez, me paso hoy una buena cosa y fue que hoy vino alguien a darme una buena noticia. Además de eso, me trato bien. Me alegro mucho.

También he ayudado a personas que no conozco porque la palabra de Dios dice, "haz el bien, hazlo sin recibir nada a cambio."

La verdad es que cuando no quiero ir a mi casa, es cuando tengo problemas. Me voy donde mis amigos a la casa de ellos.

Me han sacado de la escuela por peliar porque no me gusta dejarme de nadie. No me gusta que me regañen porque soy muy resentido. Cuando eso pasa, me quedo con ese resentimiento que me pone triste y muy mal. Aunque uno quiera, no puede hacer nada. Aunque uno quiera hacer algo, uno se siente sofocado porque quiere tomar venganza de la persona que lastima a nuestros amigos y a mí.

**From The Beat: Por lo menos, sabes como controlar tus sentimientos negativos cuando otros no lo pueden hacer. Eso es algo bueno. Lo mejor que uno puede hacer es buscar la forma como evitar problemas y buscar la forma como solucionar los conflictos de la mejor y segura manera que no afecten a otros ni a ti mismo. Tienes la solución perfecta para idear con tus emociones. Siempre úsalos. Hey, se te olvido decirnos cual era esa noticia.**

## Good News

For the first time, a good thing happened to me today, and it was that someone came to give me one good new. Besides that, he treated me well, and it made me happy.

I've also helped people I don't know because the Word of God says, "do what's good, without expecting to receive something back."

The truth is that when I don't want to go back home is when I have many problems with my family. I stay at my friend's house.

I've been kicked out of school for fighting because I don't like anyone to fool me. I also don't like to be yelled at because I am very resentful. When that happens, I feel a period of resentment that makes me feel sad. Even if I try to avoid, I can't avoid it. In those cases, I feel so suffocated that makes me want to take revenge against the person who hurt friends and I.

-Juan, San Francisco

**From The Beat: At least, you have control over your negative feelings when others don't. That's a good thing. The best thing you can do is to avoid getting into more trouble and the find the best and safe way to deal with conflicts that won't affect others or even yourself. You have the perfect solution to deal with your emotions. Keep like that always. Hey, you forgot to share with us about your news.**

## Pensamientos De Los Temas

Cuando Llegue a en Portland, Oregon USA, conoci a varia gente que se porto bien conmigo.

Cuando yo no tenía nada aqui, yo creo que esas personas me ayudaron con mi comportamiento. Le daba mi confianza y pues somos buenos amigos. Yo he ayudado algunas veces a personas que llegan, de donde yo soy, dondeles alguna camisa, pantalón, o cualquier cosa.

Hablando de querer ir a mi casa, a mí me gustaría regresar a casa porque todos ellos se portan bien conmigo. Si salgo de aqui, si Dios lo quiere, mis problemas se aliviaran.

Me imagino que perder a alguien es muy doloroso, especialmente a alguien a quien yo quiero. Gracias a Dios yo no he perdido a ningún familiar.

Cuando quiero vengarme a veces de algunas personas que se han pasado conmigo, lo pienso y me arrepiento antes de hacer algo, porque la palabra de Dios dice que hay que perdonar a nuestros enemigos. Si me vengo de esa persona, despues me arrepiento. Creo que vengarse no te quita el dolor de perder a alguien.

Una vez perdone a mi primo quien me quería hacer algo terrible y despues me pidió perdón. Cuando paso eso me senti muy furioso.

**From The Beat: Esperamos que hagas lo posible para volver al lugar donde perteneces. Haber pensado antes de actuar fue lo mejor que hubieses hecho La venganza no trae nada mas que más desgracias y sangre derramada. Hay que saber perdonar a como a nosotros nos gustaria que nos perdonen. Se nota que tienes una gran facilidad en como expresar tus ideas. Tienes ese don, usalo para tu conveniencia. Gracias por tu tiempo.**

## Thoughts About The Topics

When I came to Portland, Oregon, I met a lot of people who treated me well. When I didn't have anything, they helped me with my behavior. I gave them my trust and we became good friends. I also help those who come here, those who are from where I am from, by giving them shirts and pants, or anything.

Talking going home, I would love to go back home because there everyone treats me very well. If I get out from here, if God wants, my problems will disappear.

I imagine that losing someone must be painful, especially someone I love. I Thank God I haven't lost any family member.

When I want to take revenge from someone who has fooled me, I think about it and regret it before doing something because the word of God states that we have to forgive our enemies. If I take revenge on that person, I'll regret it later. I think revenge doesn't take the pain of losing someone.

One time, I wanted to take revenge on a cousin who did something horrible to me and he asked me for forgiveness. When that happened, I felt furious.

-Luis, San Francisco

**From The Beat: We hope you do your best in returning where you belong. Thinking before acting is the best thing you could have done. Revenge doesn't bring nothing else but more disgrace and more blood spills. You have to learn to forgive like we would love to be forgiven. It's noticeable that you have skills in expressing your ideas easily. You have that gift. Use it for your convenience. Thanks for your time.**

*The truth is that when I don't want to go back home is when I have many problems with my family.*

## El Día Que Salí de Honduras

Bueno, yo les voy a contar de el día que sali de Honduras. Recuerdo que mi mama me decía que me cuidara porque el camino hacia la USA era muy dificil.

Yo con lágrimas en mis ojos la abrace y me despedi de ella. Le dije, "te prometo que te cuidare." Luego también le dije, "pidale a Dios que llegue con bien para poderte ayudar a ti y a mi papa, quien no puede caminar."

Dios me ayudó y miren lo que vine a hacer, a vender drogas. Mire donde estoy, encerrado sin salida, pidiendole a Dios que me ayude para salir de aqui y poder hacer una vida nueva.

Por eso les digo que trabajen para que no vengan a este lugar sin salida.

**From the Beat:** La verdad es que es una gran lástima lo te pasó. Nunca debistes haber hecho un promesa que no ibas a cumplir. Ahora tienes que aceptar que cometistes un error y tenes que aprender de el. Usa esta experiencia para darte cuenta de lo que realmente vale la pena peliar en la vida. ¿Qué aprendistes de todo esto?

## The Day I Left Honduras

Well, I'm going to share something about the day I left Honduras. I remember that my mom would tell me to take care of myself because the journey to the US was very hard.

With tears coming out of my eyes, I hugged her and said good-bye to her. I told her, "I promise that I will take care of myself." Later, I said to her, "ask God to help me get there safe, so I can help you and my dad, who can't walk."

God helped me and look at what I came to do, to sell drugs. Look at where I am, locked up, asking God to help me get out and be able to live a new life.

That's why I ask you to work hard, so you won't end up in places like this one without way out.

**-Roberis, San Francisco**  
**From The Beat:** It's a shame that things ended up like this. You should have never promised something if you knew you weren't going to keep. Now you have to accept that you made a mistake and learn from it. Use this experience to realize what's worth fighting for in life. What did you learn from all this?

## Los Días Que No Quiero Ir A Casa

Bueno, los días que no quiero ir a al canton es porque ando bajo la influencia de las drogas o alcohol.

No quiero ir a casa porque no quiero que me miren mis familiares y mis hermanos. No es que me regañen, pero no em gustaría que mis hermanas hicieran lo mismo.

Les quiero pedir perdón por las cosas que hago.

**From The Beat:** Aunque tu no lo creas, te vean o no te vean, estan aprendiendo algo negativo de ti. Al no verte en casa, ellos aprenderan que esta bien no estar en casa. Si quieres que ellos vayan por el buen camino, tienes que dar el ejemplo del buen camino. Tienes que buscar la forma como dejar las drogas y el alcohol. Pide ayuda ahorita que puedes no despues cuando sea tardes.

## The Days I Don't Want To Home

Well, the days I don't want to go home are when I am under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

I don't like to go home because I don't want my family and brothers to see me like that. Is not the fact that my parents would scold me but I wouldn't like my siblings to do the same things I do.

I want to ask them for forgiveness for the things I do.

**-Os, Santa Clara**  
**From The Beat:** Believe it or not, whether they see you getting high and drunk, they are learning something negative from you. Not seeing you at home, they are learning that is OK not to be home. If you want them to walk a good road, you need to set a good example. You need to fins the way to leave drugs and alcohol alone. Ask for help now that you can and not later when it's too late.

## El Muchacho Del Basurero

Había una vez un muchacho que vivía en el basurero, reciclando botes de sodas. Un día se encontró una bolsa negra. Esa bolsa negra era un milagro de Dios porque estaba llena de dinero.

El muchacho fue y la entrego al policia del apartamento. Haber hecho esto, le ayudo mucho porque lo ayudaron a él en muchas maneras. Le dieron un apartamento, un chofer, y una vivienda. El les dio muchas gracias por todo, porque o sino, quien sabe donde estuviera. A lo mejor estuviera en la perdición, usando droga.

Por eso hice lo que hice. Le doy gracias a Dios por todo. Por eso hay que ser honesto porque así te va mejor. Eso es todo lo que tengo que decir.

**From The Beat:** ¿Eres tú este muchacho? ¿Si si, que fue lo que te hizo tomar esa decision de devolverlo? Si fuistes él, hicistes bien. No hay otra cosa que la honestidad. Gracias por tu tiempo.

## The Guy From The Garbage Dump

There was a guy who lived in a garbage dump. He lived in a garbage dump recycling soda's cans. One day, he found a black bag. That black bag was a God's miracle because it was full of money.

The guy returned it to the police from the apartment. By doing this, he was helped in many different ways. They gave him an apartment, a chauffer, or else who would know what could have been of his destiny. Maybe he would have ended in perdition, using drugs.

That's why I did what I had to do. I thank God for everything. That's why you have to be honest because things go better to you. That's all I have to say.

**-Erivano, Santa Cruz**  
**From The Beat:** Are you that guy? If so, what made you make that decision? If you were him, you did the right thing. There isn't such a thing than honesty. Thank you for your time.

## A Todos Los Que Están Aquí

Hechamosles ganas a todos los que estamos en la cárcel. No renieguen porque estan atrapados al igual que yo.

Lo único que les digo es que Dios nos ama y El no nos va a desamparar. Tengamos fe que muy pronto salgamos de aqui y nunca regresar.

Es muy triste estar encerrado mayormente sin tu familia. Que Dios nos bendiga y pidanle mucho a mi Dios porque para El no hay nada imposible.

De tal manera amo a Dios, al mundo que ha dado, a su hijo Unigento para que todo aquel que en El crea, no se pierda, sino tenga vida eternal.

"Clama a mí y yo te enseñare cosas grande y ocultas que tú no conoces dice" mi Dios.

**From The Beat:** Que bien que te hayas enfocado en algo bien positivo. Esperamos que por lo menos más de algunos lean tu mensaje y cambia la forma de sus pensar. Sigue pensando! Te esta ayudando!

## To All Who Are Here

Let's keep ourselves active to all who are here. Don't deny that you are trapped like I am.

The only thing I'm going to say to you is that God loves you and he will never abandon us. Let's have faith that very soon we will get out from here and never come back.

It's sad to be locked without your family. God bless us and ask him anything because nothing is impossible for him.

From all, I love God, the world he has given us, His son who was sent, and so we would all believe in him to have eternal life.

"Climb up to me, and I will show you things that are hidden that you don't know," says God.

**-Anónimo, Marin**  
**From The Beat:** It's good to know you are focusing in something positive. We hope that at least one of many get your message and change the way they think. Keep believing! It's helping you!

### Your Choices Will Determine Your Future

They say it takes a village to raise a child  
But how can you raise a child if they're out on the  
streets, runnin' wild?  
It's hard for us to grow up, not doing wrong  
'Cause everything we do wrong  
We learn from listenin' to a song  
But the media can't be blamed for all out negative thoughts  
And not only drugs can be blamed for why our minds rot  
Growin' up, we had no money in our pockets  
Had to make a quick dollah, slangin' dope and poppin' rockets  
Gotta keep it moving, pullin' licks or pushin' weight  
Starts off good, but in the end, it's not so great  
Livin' in the streets, this is only half of what we go through  
But this is not the life for me, it is not the life I choose  
I'ma get my education and I'ma do it big  
I'll be livin' that good life, while you strugglin' to live  
So you better think twice and make the best decision  
'Cause whichever you choose depends of whether you'll be livin'

**-Joseph**

**From The Beat:** How right you are, Joseph, about what you choose now. It's easy to choose the fast over the safe, but the old saying is true, "You reap what you sow." We also admire the fact that in this tight poem, you allocate responsibility among yourselves and the system for failing you for why so many young people end up as prisoners (or worse). We agree. Government has failed to do what is promised in the Constitution, "to provide for the general welfare." But their failure cannot be used as an excuse for not taking responsibility for one's own decisions. That may not be fair, but that's the way it is. So keep the promises you make here, and you won't disappoint yourself again.

*Livin' in the streets, this is only  
half of what we go through  
But this is not the life for me, it  
is not the life I choose*

### 100 Years

It's shady in this juvenile hall shhh. We stay gettin' played in here. I can't wait until the day that they let me out. I know I gotta do better in life when I get out. I also have to do better by my family. I haven't really been showin' my moms the respect she deserves. She the queen in my life and she come first before anybody. Family is the best thing to have when you're down and out.

When I get out I'ma show my mom how much I really care. I'ma get a job and see what's up with college. I'm not trying to be another statistic in the 'hood. I'm also not trying to have my mom crying over my body at an early age. Just by saying that, I start thinking about my bra CJ, RIP. I know his moms goin' through it right now. I'm hot, because I couldn't go to the funeral, but, Bra know I would have been there if I could. I stay shootin' dice with bra, and we used to stay slap boxin', but we goin' ride for bra, and keep the money comin' in.

**-Mookie**

**From The Beat:** We admire everything you say in this piece... until the very end. When you say you're going to ride for your dead homie, it's another way of putting something ahead of the love you have for your mother. Sometimes, you can't have it both ways, Mookie. Just don't stop thinking about what you owe the woman who brought you into this world and who stands by you through it all. When you put other things in front of that, whether it's revenge for CJ or chasing after money, you're risking everything. And all the words of love in the world can't undo what it means not to be there for your mom. Finish school; go to college. And don't risk being taken from your mom again!

### Time Waits For No Man

Power owns all  
and respect is what we earn from the streets,  
Or to what you deserve.  
You look around and think of what you've done  
And when you're willing to do all,  
Then it seems you have the power of everything.  
But with the pistol in your pocket,  
People say, "Drop it,"  
But you can only drop it once you feel the power when  
you pop it.  
Hesitation isn't a problem—the streets got you  
convinced,  
But don't get fooled by the tricks...  
they could catch you in one  
One day you will notice what you've done  
There's only time to watch your fame fade to the 'hood  
to the drugs  
Everything you had is now gone  
Slangin', bangin', shhh ain't easy  
You now stuck in the pen,  
Trying to have God forgive your sin,  
But you only had control of yourself  
When you decided to take a life of another.  
Be ready to remember the pain...  
Ain't easy an' there's no med to cure.  
Fear is no longer there.  
You only got yourself through time.  
There's no one to prove yourself to.

**-Raquel**

**From The Beat:** You've left us with some powerful images in this reverie about consequences. The one that will stick with us — and we hope with everyone who reads what you've written — is the line: "You only got yourself through time." We're trying to imagine what that would be like, and it makes us shudder to think about it. To be alone with ourselves for all time. We hope this chilling but accurate description reaches those who are moving toward that end without giving it a second thought!

### Grief

Some things you can't believe,  
Some grief will make you scream,  
Make others cry if you caused it,  
Only you know why  
You can relieve someone of grief by doing simple things  
It can change the whole scene  
Life's full of emotions. Grief is one that could be strong,  
But it could be overcome.  
It could be temporary or long,  
Depending on how strong your heart and mind is  
Grief made me shed tears  
And announce my fears to others —  
My mother and brothers.  
Grief could be felt amongst lovers  
Anybody  
You could stop it; you could start it  
It's up to you  
What part of it do you want?  
Everybody, just be strong.  
Twin... I'm gone.

**-Twin Two**

**From The Beat:** We really like this poem, and especially that you were able to put it together in your mind and then on paper in the space of one workshop. We would love to read a longer explanation of how grief caused you to announce your fears to your family, always difficult to do, and always a sign of maturity and responsibility. What can you tell us about that?

## Dear My Family

I would like to start this piece by saying that family is the most precious thing in my life. I love my family with all my heart. Even though I have messed up some of my relationships with my family members, I plan on wasting no more time. I don't regret what I've done, only because it has taught me to be a better person and a better part of my family.

I have always loved my family, I just never knew how to express my feelings because of the rough times I had growing up, having only moms to raise me. But now, all my intentions are good. I love my lil' sister and mom with all my heart. They're my queens, and only pray to God that everything turns out well.

**-Cesar**

**From The Beat: We admire this piece so much, Cesar, because it takes strength and humility to take responsibility for how you've messed up some of the past family relationships. But we want to emphasize the word "past" because your future is what really counts, and it is very clear that you already understand this. Having only good intentions is the necessary beginning. After that, comes the hard work of relationship building, and determination not to go back to old ways that didn't work in the past. We know you're up to it, so now go out and do it!**

## My Life

I was born in the US, raised up in Mexico. I came back at the time when I was six years young. I started going to Fair Oaks School in the middle of second grade. It was hard for me because I didn't know the language, English. I also didn't know anybody at the school. I felt alone, 'cause I didn't have no one to talk to or someone that could talk to me at school.

Then one day I asked my mom, "Why did we come to the U.S.? I don't like it here. I want to go back to Mexico where all my family is." Then my mom answered, "The reason why we came here to the U.S. is because I want you to have a better life."

So time passed fast and I learned how to speak English. So now that I learned the language English, I had lots of friends that I could never imagine I was doing good in school, getting high grades — until one day I decided to smoke a blunt with my homeboys. That's when my whole life changed, because instead of getting good grades, I went with my homeboys and got really high by smoking weed. That's when I got caught up in drugs, and I also started to gangbang.

Now look at me. I am locked up, but it's nothing, because I know I'ma get out. I got one thing in mind and that's that I'm not gonna get locked up again. That's for sure. Why? Well, I'ma tell you why. I'm not gonna get locked up because this is my first and last time that I ever get locked up. When I had court, the judge said, "You violated your probation, and for that you are going to get locked up."

So they locked me up, but that's not why. Now I'ma tell you the real thing, why I am not going to get locked up ever again. That is because my mom came and visited me, and when I got to the table, she got up and hugged me and started to cry because she didn't want to see me in here. I felt really bad when I saw her crying, so I told my mother, "You know what, Mom? You're going to see a different son of yours." That made her feel better and she stopped crying. So that's why I'm never gonna end up in here, because I don't want to see my mom in pain, like how I saw her that day.

**-Osvaldo**

**From The Beat: First, we want to tell you what an accomplishment it is that you have mastered English, always a difficult language, even for those who spoke it at home. The fact that you have learned this second language so well, and can express yourself in ways that should make most Americans (who can only speak one language) envious of your skills. That already tells us that you have a fine brain that is working for you. But then, when we got to the end of this declaration of independence from a life of pain and incarceration, we also could see what a big and loving heart you have. Never forget the powerful love and warmth your mother's hug represents, and all that you owe her for what she's given you, so that you keep your promise to give back to her the son she wants to see grow into a responsible man. We see it happening. Keep it going.**

## My Baby Sister's Eyes

I'm hurtin' inside  
 As I'm writing this, tears are coming out my eyes  
 It's hard for me to say this, but my mom was right  
 I took advantage of my life  
 Thinking every day is guaranteed  
 But what hurts the most is 'cause this all dawned on me  
 It hurts to know that you can't see your family for a whole year  
 And to live with regret  
 I put the homies over my family  
 And at the end the only ones who stayed with me was my family  
 My stupidity led me in here  
 Now I'm going to outta-state placement for a year  
 It's hard to see my mom cry  
 To say good-bye

I've held so much anger and frustrations inside  
 I keep thinking to myself: "Everything's gonna be all right"  
 I've smiled now and cried later way too many times  
 I don't care if anyone sees me cry

I don't want mota  
 I don't want rocks  
 I don't want coke  
 Nor do I want alcohol

All I want is to look in my baby sister's eyes  
 To hug my mom and tell her how much I'm sorry  
 To see my other two lil' sisters, see them smile  
 I don't want my old ways back

I want my family  
 My mom used to say that at the end all you have is your family  
 But to me, at one point, the homies were my family

No matter what I do  
 My mom's always there  
 No matter what I put her through  
 She's always waiting for me in open arms  
 Every visit I get she tells me she loves me  
 Why did I run?

It wasn't even worth all of this  
 I'd rather be home right now watchin' TV with my lil' sis  
 But I did the crime so I'm gonna do the time  
 But I just wanted to say I'm sorry, Mom  
 And I love you

**-B Eyes**

**From The Beat: Regret and remorse and only useful emotions as guideposts to a different and better future. We all make mistakes, but we don't all learn from them. You are fortunate because you have learned from yours some extremely valuable lessons. Yes, there are consequences for what you've done in the past. But don't let those consequences beat you down. Keep the promises you make in this very strong declaration of independence. Here you stand, no longer a little girl lured into the life by the promises and visions of children. Here you stand, a responsible young woman. Good for you!**

## Climbing Up

It hurts to hear that I am a failure.  
 All the work I've done in the last year  
 The G.I.R.L.S. program wasn't for me  
 I didn't get to finish it while being free  
 My PO thinks I have a bad attitude  
 She thinks I didn't show enough gratitude  
 Nothing I did was good enough  
 But the threats of getting locked up were not a bluff  
 I wish I could have been a success story  
 But soon enough, you will see me in my glory  
 I'm getting off probation in a few weeks  
 Ready to continue my life up toward the peaks  
 I'll come back to the judge some day to show her  
 That I'm not just a failure  
 Although it's easy for me to say it  
 I hope one day I can believe it

**-Gina**

**From The Beat: Remember those peaks to which you aspire/ Can never be reached, you can always reach higher/ The story of your life is yet to be written/ Don't judge it a failure from where you are sittin'/ Pull yourself up, one step at a time/ The peaks that you'll conquer count less than the climb!**

## The Truth About Love

In my cell all alone  
 Singing love songs  
 Wondering who's the next man in my life  
 Wondering will he last  
 I used to do anything for my men  
 'Cause they promised me love  
 But love became just sex at the end  
 And left me feeling dumb  
 There's always another man out there  
 Who will try and spit his game  
 Tell you how pretty you are  
 And how he thinks about you throughout this day  
 He pushes every compliment in your heart  
 And makes you feel like a queen  
 But then you really find out what's up with him  
 How do you know when your man really cares about you?  
 He will give up and risk everything he has for you  
 He will be the one to wipe those tears from your eyes  
 He will be the one to tell you what's wrong or right  
 He will look in your eyes  
 And not just look at your thighs  
 He will learn the true beauty of your insides and never regret to be in your life  
 This is what love is  
 Will I find it one day?  
 But for now I'ma wait for love  
 Until it finds me  
 And, hopefully, the next man that comes along  
 Will love me  
 For me

-B Eyes

**From The Beat: You were a child in love with children, and with the notion of being in love. Boys are taught, too often, that girls are worth less than them, that they aren't to be respected as they demand to be respected (and, ironically, as they demand that their mothers be respected). So, in the end, it is you who must love yourself, and love means to respect all of you, what's inside as well as what's outside. When you demand respect, you will get it. Looking for love is a very old story, and seldom ends well. So we are behind you all the way when you say you're going to wait for love to find you. It will. Be patient.**

## Saying "No"

It's hard saying no, but sometime you got to say no because you might end up at the wrong place at the wrong place at the wrong time. Like I told my homies, one day, "No," about something they wanted to do. And now one of them in jail for murder and the other one in jail, lookin' at ten years for something they could've thought about and did something else.

But even though they did what they did, I still love them and they always go' be my homies, no matter what they did. But I had the balls to say, "No," and they respect me for that. If a person can't say no if you don't want to go, then you ain't no real man. You can do what you want to do. You don't have to do something with your friends.

-Tb

**From The Beat: You're right, TB, it takes some cajones to be able to stand up to friends and not go along with what they want you to. It is a sign of responsibility and maturity. As far as loving your homies even though they went down for something they could have avoided but didn't, we think that makes you an honorable person. As many people who call themselves Christians like to say, "I can love the sinner, but hate the sin."**

## Grief

I have grieved over someone I lost. When you first find out you are shocked, but when you realize it's fo' real, you get a weird feeling in your body. I lost a close friend, and to me, it was a physical pain through my body. I would never get over the loss, but I'm always going to know that he is in a better place. My advice is to everyone who lost someone is that he is always watching over you every second.

-Tito

**From The Beat: We think this is a good strategy for dealing with the pain of loss. We're sorry about your close friend.**

## To Widow

This is to someone who I cared about a lot. Me and him were like best friends and now that he's gone, it's so hard for me, 'cause he was my everything. He was there when I didn't care about life no more. He was there singing to me love songs. He was there when I just broke up with my vato. After that he was holding me in his muscular arms all night.

I was there to help him escape from the cops when he had a warrant out for him. I was the one backing him up in fights. He became my best friend. He knew my ins and outs and I knew his. And now that he's in jail, my life is triste.

I want him back to tell him what's been going on. I want to hold him tight all night and never to let go. We both had a warrant out for us and now that we're apart, life's going too slow. I just hope that in five years, when he gets out, he still knows how much I missed him.

-B Eyes

**From The Beat: The theme of love is like a powerful river that runs through almost everything you write. This tells us what a big and caring heart you have. We already know, from your writing skills, that you have a big and working head. Those dual qualities — head and heart — are gifts that not everyone is so blessed with. Use them to build a better future so that, instead of helping someone you care about escape from the cops or backing him up in fights, you can help him and yourself stay out of situations which can lead to running from cops or engaging in beef. Use your skills to think about your past as a way to light a path to a new tomorrow.**

## My Last Words Before I Go To Wyoming

I wanna look in your eyes all night  
 But we both know that that can't happen tonight  
 I wanna listen to all your stories  
 But I'm sorry I can't, 'cause I'm locked up  
 I wanna hold you and feel your chest on mine  
 Feel both our heartbeats become as one  
 I wanna be there for you when you need me  
 I wanna be the one to help pick you up from your knees  
 I want you to know that I won't ever judge you  
 I want you to know that when everyone leaves  
 I'll still be there  
 I wanna go to sleep then wake up to your beautiful smile  
 I wanna be with you 'cause my love for you goes on for miles  
 I wanna be with you 'cause one look gets my body going wild  
 I wanna be with you, Mijo, and I'm not lyin'  
 I'm taking chances for you  
 So please say I do  
 I promise, Mijo, I'm all you want in a girl  
 And I'm ready to show you all my love for you

-B Eyes

**From The Beat: You're torn between the emerging woman who recognizes that feelings of love can be like dope, blurring the line between reality and fantasy, and the child you were looking and wanting love to be like a fairytale. You are not "all" your mijo might want in a girl, because nobody is "all" anything for another person. We know that euphoric feeling you're trying to preserve through feelings of love, but guard your heart against inevitable disappointment when reality intrudes on fantasy. Human relationships are not movies. They are often difficult. Love yourself, and allow yourself to grow before declaring your undying love. And good luck in Wyoming.**

## I Miss Yaww

I am sorry, mom and dad, for everything I made you go through — all the pain and tears and struggle. I never wanted to make you cry, but I did anyways, and I regret that because, mom and dad, I love you to death.

But, mom and dad I'm going to continue doing what I do. I know it hurts you, but that's the way I was raised to be. I know it hurts you coming here to see me locked up behind these walls. It's my fault and nobody else's, but I have to say one more thing—I miss yaww.

-Lil' Pako

**From The Beat: You're going to have to do more to explain to us the paradox in this piece. You claim to love your mom and dad, but then you promise to continue doing the things that you know hurt them. How can that be love? You also say you were raised to be like that, but then, who raised you? If your parents raised you, did they raise you to hurt them? Those are the paradoxes we cannot understand. Please explain.**

## You Will Eventually Do What Your People Do

When my friends did hard drugs, such as crystal meth or heroin, I would always refuse an offer that they always made. Eventually I tried it and I liked it, but the lesson learned to me is the more you hang around a person who does something you don't like, you will eventually do it, too.

But I have a strong overall view on it now. I will never pick up my next hit because I know what to expect now, and it just doesn't feel right to me.

-D

**From The Beat: We're sorry you caved in to peer pressure, but we're glad that you've seen where that kind of weakness can lead. It takes inner strength to say no, but in the end, that strength will prepare you for a future of freedom. Don't forget!**

## You Know You Care

It hurts so much here sitting in my room, thinking what I put you through. I know I done so many things, like hurt you, cheat on you, but it doesn't mean you don't have to write me back. After two years of being together and showing you that I love you, you sit in your room acting like you don't care. But the truth, you know you do, so there is no point of acting like we never had nothing.

-Sapo

**From The Beat: What can we say, Sapo? You admit to cheating on her. You admit to hurting her. And it's clear that when you gave the system power to take you away, you weren't really thinking of her. So, what does she owe you? What is the appropriate response? Some consequences can't be undone.**

### Two Step

What's good, everybody? Me? Nothin', just chillin', tryin' to get out in six months by bein' a 2-step my whole stay. If I slip one time, doin' one whole year. Things that I do to stay out of trouble is keep my mouth shut, go along with the program, and do my time, nobody else's.

-Italiano

**From The Beat: All good strategies, young Italiano. Now, can you exercise the same amount of self-control when you get out of here so that you never have to come back?**

### It's Time For Me To Be Who I Really Am

I wanna be in the outs  
Can't wait to be in my house  
I have court Monday  
I'm praying to be out  
It's hard to think positive  
But that's my only hope

Dear God,

I can't go to camp. I need to go home. I could do good, and I know it's hard, but I'ma do my best. Everybody wants me to do good, and I understand, because this place ain't for me or for anybody in here. But we all make mistakes and it's time we should take responsibility for our actions. It's hard to learn from my mistakes, because in the end I end up doing the same. But it's time. It's time for me to stop being the same. It's time to be who I really am, and that's me!

-Care Bear

**From The Beat: We always think of prayer as a two-way street. God hears your prayers, but answers them with prayers of his own to you. Do you hear His prayers? Can you answer them? You know what He wants from you, and you know He's waiting to see if you can deliver. Can you? Start with a plan for your future, not just a hope. You need more than words, even true words like "it's time to take responsibility." You need to write down a brief list of things you're going to do, like: 1) go to school every day; 2) stay home at night and do my homework; 3) listen to what my mother tells me, and don't fight with her; 4) don't risk my freedom by doing the things that have led to lock-up in the past. If you follow those simple steps, you'll be walking away from here and not coming back.**

### Always Something To Do In The 'Hood

The only thing that I miss about being on the outs is kicking it in the 'hood with the homeboys and drinking. I don't really care about anyone or anything else, 'cause my homeboys are the only ones that I can really depend on to have my back and stop me from getting caught when I'm doing whatever I do.

Every time I go to the 'hood, there's always something to do that can make me feel good. I love my 'hood and my homeboys, no matter what happens, 'cause I am who I am and I do what I do.

-Lil' Enemy

**From The Beat: Yeah, you are who you are and you do what you do — which, at the moment, is taking orders from strangers telling you when to get up, when and what to eat, when to talk and when to be silent, what to wear, etc. If that's what you mean by doing what you do, then prepare for a whole lot more of it, only the next stop won't be nearly as nice as where you are right now. If you're depending on homies to "stop you from getting caught," then you're depending on people that have already failed you. Or, are we missing something?**

### My Homie

I was chilling in the field in Fair Oaks School. It was around 9:00 pm. A bunch of people were sittin' down in the middle of the apartments, so I went inside my home and suddenly I saw a stranger running down the alley with bottles of Coronas in his hands. He was running away from gangstas. So the one of the gangsters told his friend to go get the heat. So he went and got the heat from the spot and ran after the victim and shot once. Luckily, the victim moved to the side and the shot missed him and hit the door of the car. So the cops came, eventually, like around 6:00 pm.

The next day the gangster who pulled the trigger got caught and he snitched on his own "homie." The gangster that pulled the trigger not only said names, he also said that the scene where this happened was a gang territory. So now you got gang task force passing through a young neighborhood every Monday, Wednesday, Friday after 6:00 pm. Now, after this incident, a lot of people from that area getting locked up! That includes me. So now I have to do time in the hall and at home. Thanks to "my homie."

-Lil' Stewie

**From The Beat: Oh no, Stewie. You aren't doing time because of your "homie." You're doing time because you gave the cops some reason to pull you out of your neighborhood. You can't blame what you are responsible for on someone else, not even a snitch. Be prepared for snitches all up and down the system, from the littlest crime all the way up to murder. (Death row is filled with people who were snitched on by the real triggerman.) The only way to escape the system is not to do whatever it is that gives the system power over your life. And what kind of madness is it to shoot someone stealing beer? Fools or children... which is it? How much worse the consequences for everyone if any of those bullets had found their mark!**

### May 27, 2008

My best day is going to be on May 27, '08. That's the day I get released. All day, all I'm gonna do is chill. I'm going to open my eyes to people who are trying to help me. I'm going to go to school.

-Luis

**From The Beat: This is a little too short to explain very much, Luis, but the few things you've told us are important. School is the key to the cage they've put you in, and accepting help is a sign of strength, not of weakness!**

### To My Baby Sister

You mean the world to me  
I love you so much  
And it hurts me to think that you're gone  
I know it hurts that your big sis is gone  
But one more year, Mija, and I'll be back home  
I want you to be strong  
And to always know that I love you  
It's hard, 'cause I don't know when's the next time I'ma see you  
You're getting so big now  
It makes me cry  
'Cause I'm missing so much in your life  
I've made so many bad mistakes  
But please, don't make them, too  
Don't listen to the people who you know is a bad influence on you  
I cry when mom says you want me home  
And I cry when I hear you're doing wrong  
I've promised you so many times that I'ma do good  
But I always end up kickin' it  
Which gets me screwed  
I've turned myself in 'cause of you  
Mom told me that you were crying every day for me  
When I was gone  
I'm sorry, lil' one  
For not being home  
The only tears that come out  
These ocean blue eyes  
Is the ones I shed for you  
'Cause you're my everything  
You are my life  
And I love you so much  
And please do good  
This is for my six-year-old sister  
Baby Blue Eyes

-B Eyes

**From The Beat: This is one of the hardest lessons of all — to recognize how our actions affect those who see us as their models, who look up to us. Children learn by what they see, not by what you tell them. So, you are right to feel sorry for the pain you've caused your little sister, even though you are suffering great pain yourself. The moral is simple (to state, not to do), which is this: If there are things you don't want your little sister to do, then don't do them yourself! If there are things you do that would make you ashamed if your little sister learned of them, then stop doing them! We know you agree with these morals, and when you come home, you can't put your knowledge into practice.**

### Thinkin' Out Loud!

Sittin' in this class thinkin' 'bout my mom  
Tryna figure out why the law is so wrong  
Got me in here 'cause violation of program  
They say because I ran, but, really, it was vacation  
Got a week more to go  
Then I'll be terminated off probation

-Booby/Tati

**From The Beat: Well, you've paid a price for that little vacation. If that was a price you were willing to pay, then you got what you wanted. Now comes the hard part, though. Don't give the system any more reasons to take away what god gave you — your freedom!**

### Trust

Somethin' I lost is trust. I wish I could have someone to trust, but I have no one. I think everyone who has somethin' to say to me is a lie. I don't know why I have no trust for no one. I feel like everyone is out to get me.

If someone does somethin' nice for me, in my mind it's so that they can play me. Paranoid is how I always seem to be, always ready for that person or thing out to get me. Having no trust ain't cool, making myself feel alone day-by-day, because I have no trust for no one. But got none but love for my loved ones.

-Creeper

**From The Beat: Where do you think your paranoia came from? Have you been betrayed by people or family? If you know that this feeling leaves you feeling alone, is there any way you can try to overcome it? You can't go through life entirely alone, depending on no one, so how can you find people who are trustworthy? Or, to put it another way, can people trust you? If so, why do you think you're different from others? If not, maybe that's why you don't trust others.**

### When I Look At You

When I look at you I feel good  
 'Cause I know that you're my boo  
 A smile so big  
 A twinkle in my eyes  
 Knowing that if we last  
 You're always gonna be my guy  
 Since you asked me out  
 My eyes go to you  
 I don't look at nobody besides you  
 'Cause I'm happy to be yours  
 You're taking risks to save this relationship  
 And so am I  
 But when I come back to Cali  
 Our relationship is gonna be stronger  
 And I'm hoping that no matter what  
 You're still gonna be in my life  
 But before I leave Cali  
 I'm gonna tell you  
 That I'm happy that you're gonna stick with me  
 And when I come back  
 Trust me, it's all gonna be worth it, Mijo

-B Eyes

**From The Beat: Love relationships are strange things. At the time they are blooming, it's impossible to think that they will ever end. Forever seems too short. But then, as things develop, you begin to see how hard they are to maintain, how much work and compromise is required, and sometimes they develop and sometimes they don't. All we're saying is that you have a long life a head of you and, while we hope this is the love of your life, if it turns out otherwise, well... we've all been there.**

### Ex-Homies

You tell them something and they tell other people after you told them not to say anything, so those kinds of people you have to try to avoid. Don't talk to them or look at them because they're fake, like pops. They try to set you up with other people for you can fight homies.

Homies are the ones that get you out of funk, not the ones that get you into funk. But family will always come through for you, no matter what, so be careful who you kick it with or who you trust.

-Kool Aid

**From The Beat: Good advice. The problem is, of course, sometimes you don't know the person you're kicking it with is untrustworthy until it's too late...**

### There's No Way It Used To Be

Once I fell in love with someone and he fell in love, too. But my love for him became too much, 'cause I've never felt like this before. I went on the run and said that I would never go back home and tried to forget about him. But every time I would kiss my new vato, for some reason I saw my first love. I drank and smoked to help heal my broken heart, but every time I was drunk or high, I would decide to call him. His love for me was way too strong, so he couldn't talk to me, 'cause he knew that it was over between us, but we both inside wanted life the way it used to be.

I find every reason to get away from him, 'cause he still tells me he loves me. I'm more mature now than back then, but it's strong, 'cause I don't love him. I'm willing to love another time and not run or hide, but not love him, love another guy. I look at my first love like a brother now and nothing more, but I know that my Romeo is out there somewhere, or maybe my first love was him. All I know is that I'm sorry for all the wrong I did. You will always be remembered, and I'm sorry about your loss.

-B Eyes

**From The Beat: This only underscores our response to your other declaration of undying love. Things change, and you should feel no remorse about that. Yes, you are more mature than you were then, and you will be even more mature as you gain more experiences in the world.**

### Cali Mentality

When I came here, I thought it was gonna be hard to control myself, but I seen a lot of the homies in my unit. Then I tried to find every way to see how to be calm in my cell by reading or writing, talking to your roommate, school, and program. Don't mess up and get an hour.

I tried not to remember how it used to be when I was home or with my mom, but I couldn't stop thinking about my mom and family and homies.

Try to stay out of jail. Think before you act. I wanted to fight people here, but I was thinking about the hours that I would get. Late.

-Kool Aid

**From The Beat: The lessons you've learned in here about self-control can also be applied when you're on the outs. It's understandable that you might want to go off on people in here sometimes, and it's admirable that you're able to think about the consequences and prevent yourself from acting. Self-control is like a habit; the more you exercise it, the easier it is to do.**

### Psalm 23 For Me

The Lord is my shepherd:  
 Safety  
 I shall not want:  
 Supply  
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:  
 Peace  
 He leadeth me beside the still waters:  
 Harmony  
 He restoreth my soul:  
 Healing  
 He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness:  
 Guidance  
 For His name's sake:  
 Purpose  
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death:  
 Darkness  
 I will fear no evil:  
 Confidence  
 For Thou art with me:  
 Protection  
 Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me:  
 Instruction  
 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:  
 Provision  
 Thou anointest my head with oil:  
 Consecration  
 My cup runneth over:  
 Abundance  
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:  
 Loving care  
 And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever:  
 Eternal home

-Antoine

**From The Beat: What a beautifully crafted explanation for the enveloping and warming words of the 23rd Psalm.**

### Grief

I wanna start off by saying that while I've been here I've seen nothing but grief and beef between young men and staff here in the hall. Grief is all over. It's a everyday thing. It's all over. I deal with it on a regular basis. I even have grief with my family.

It's hard to deal with, but I rather deal with family grief than to deal with everybody else's grief. I rather keep it cool and get back to my family to work on some of the grief that we have. I even worked on that while I'm here, but there's always something new. We just gotta keep praying and keep it moving with life. Period.

-Cesar

**From The Beat: Even though you end this heart-felt piece with the word, "Period," it's really not the end, is it Cesar? Praying and keeping it moving with life is a process that has no period, no end. Keep working on the pain that grief causes. Try to stay out of the daily grief that you see here because, in the end, it is the strength of your family ties that will keep you strong, and moving forward.**

### To Someone Special In My Life

I'm missin' you so much  
 A tear down my cheek  
 Your last words were to me  
 "Do good, Mija, make me proud"  
 Now look at me screwing around  
 I stopped banging and claiming for you  
 But it's hurtin', 'cause at one point in my life  
 All I had was you  
 I miss you so much  
 Sometimes you're in my dreams  
 Just you and me  
 I'm sorry, but it's hard for me  
 It's like I lost you just yesterday  
 'Cause every day I feel the pain  
 I'm triste  
 Remember that song we used to sing  
 When we are drunk  
 Well, that's the song that's always in my head  
 "Remember when I die, girl, don't you cry  
 Just dry your eyes  
 I never meant for me to say good-bye  
 But remember when I die"  
 That was the song that you sang to me once  
 And, even though you're dead  
 You're always in my head  
 Well, much love and respect, Chino  
 Alrato

-B Eyes

**From The Beat: What a sad but loving tribute to yet another victim of a meaningless war! We're sorry for your loss, and all the losses that pile up in these pages. Now your responsibility is to live long and free so that you can keep alive Chino's memory... and avoid his fate.**



### **Pain From A Poet**

The pain in pleasure for a poet is unknown to someone who not knows but, poetry, makes nothing happen 'cause it survives by it's own sayings. Life has no meaning for poetry 'cause you have to hear with your eyes, hearing has no meaning 'cause you see with your eyes, hearing has no meaning 'cause you see with your ears. L o v e ? Love doesn't look for a reason, love is beyond reason... first sight, anonymous, passion, soul mate...the wall... from a broke heart... synchronizing... nearing the end of life, without a human friend... what must it be like? Visible silhouette's, also blurry but lingering as it vanishes. Something quite different, emptiness, from another perspective but, also from a stranger's feelings, leaving a trail of tears... this ecstasy of love; no fear in love, but to secure your love, whose violent property fore doe's itself, is the undertaking of... pain from a poet

Shawn La' Mont Davis Jr. aka Contrite is writing us from a the CDC in San Bernardino, CA. Shawn is not a new writer, but we haven't heard from him in a while. We're glad that you've reached out to us again Shawn. Keep in touch and the thoughtful pieces coming our way!

### **"We're"**

Dismissed with prejudice?  
 All of us (criminal per. Say) are the future,  
 but we bring ignominy to ourselves!  
 But, we try to be discrete, freestanding,  
 depriving our own youthfulness.  
 Discrimination? We do it to ourselves  
 when we discount the importance of being... living...  
 changing... why?  
 Every time we put ourselves in a jam,  
 we was, basis, individual martinet.  
 It's us... We lock up the future... dreams...  
 Talents and gifted, not the judge, DA, police, witness, or  
 lawyer...  
 us, you and me,  
 'cause once we commit wrong...all of thee above...is  
 gone...  
 it's a waste.  
 We have to live life with realism  
 'cause if we keep being impractical or visionary... we  
 won't make it.

### **Ideal Relationships with God, Self, and Others**

The scriptures, either by specific statement or by implication, presents us with certain ideals concerning our relationships with God, self, and others. Victimization disrupts these relationships.

The ideal relationships with God means that a person is a new and growing creature, united with the Lord, one with him and living as close to the father as Jesus did.

The ideal relationship with oneself involves loving yourself as God does, accepting and forgiving oneself. Each person is to see him or herself as a full-fledged child of God; who can hold her or his head high as a prince or princess. Such a person is free to accept and forgive those who have hurt him or her.

The ideal relationship with others involves loving them as God loves them and as one (Ideally) loves oneself. We are to follow Jesus' example and serve others, relating to them as members of the same family, the same body with Christ as the head.

*Well. Thank you for the published work, and from now on I'll send mines (poems) to hopefully encourage our readers and writers in every aspect.*

### **Our Surrender To God**

Faith is always a surrender. Faith is the eye that sees the invisible. When I look at something, I surrender myself to the impression that it makes upon me. Faith is the ear that hearkens to the voice of God.

When I believe a message I surrender myself to the influence, whether cheering or saddening, that the words exercise on me. When I believe in Jesus, I surrender myself to him, in reflection, in desire, in expectation, in order that he may be in me and do n me that for which he has been given to me by God.

### **Hey!**

Thanks for having a young brother, and blessing me to be able to see my verses (poems) in The Beat. Sorry that I haven't been able to enlighten our readers for a while, but never the less, I'm here. Things have turned around since my last report to you all, it is truly a blessing. I'm just about ready to go home, but I'mgonna keep that under my hat until I'm free and I'll share -promise-

Well. Thank you for the published work, and from now on I'll send mines (poems) to hopefully encourage our readers and writers in every aspect. So I'll just send you a whole lot, so expect more. Oh yeah, I would appreciate a weekly magazine. PLEASE!

Sincerely...

### **It's The Purest Love**

To catch laughter, bond; is friendship.

Even when there are clouds in your sky and rain...  
 we'll get soaked together.

A special one remains unchanged, by time, or distance.

It's the purest love...unconditional and true,  
 it's the understanding of any situation, forgiving, of any  
 mistake.

To create a support that is constant, while everything  
 else changes.

It's a friendship of mutual genuine liking.

To possess love is a treasure that makes life more  
 valuable.

### **Multiform**

The image of ones self,  
 which I try to create in his own mind,  
 in order that I may love thyself  
 is very different from the image which he tries to create  
 in the minds of others  
 in order that you love me.

## A Week In The Life of Arizona

Early morning brings with it the constant rumbling sound of feet headed towards the chow hall to eat before being sent out on one of the gun-gangs to perform menial labor. The gun-gang consist of hundreds of prisoners dressed in carrot-colored jumpsuits, transported all over the state to perform labor for the state, counties, etc. Such task as road cleanup, digging ditches, state and federal forestry work. My dreams, not unlike my waking moments are shattered with the paralyzing-realization that I am being held hostage against my will under threat of death by parasitic, people-keepers, the lowest of the lowest of humanity.

My motivation to get up out of bed timely this morning depends upon whether or not a mindless guard is working the dorm who will enforce the idiotic rules that beds are suppose to be made by 8 am. My every action is calculated, premised on whether or not a prison guard is both qualified and willing to make me comply with the rules or policies. It is called passive resistance, utilizing the Law of Attribution, no different than a POW. Is honored bound to employ when captured and held captive by enemy forces.

To exist, I must resist at every opportunity. As it was said many-many years ago, if a man isn't free and he isn't fighting for his freedom, he does not deserve to live. Hearing the jungles of keys and their loud walkie-talkies, I force myself to get up and grudgingly begin to make my bed, cursing my fascist captors, their parents, their children, their dogs and their Gods. I literally have to force myself to get up and begin to comply with their childish rules to avoid having to hear these welfare-bums knocking on my door, ordering me to make my bed. Just the sound of their voice is nauseously sickening, causing me grievous pain; making me livid with renewed hatred and contempt for these sub humanoids leaches, who are slavers, living off oppression and misery.

Here comes the goon-squad with their mangy drug-sniffing dogs; so this will be a drug shakedown. Four dogs so far and ten idiots and a clown in civilian clothes and a semi-decent female

hmmm! No time for that now, I have to put on the harden, mad-dog expression on my face. Both sides play this intimidation game. I really would like to slap one of their dogs (laughter), of course I would be bitten and beaten down by the goon squad and most likely street beefed (charged with an assault upon an officer) imagine that?

So, I'll suppress that impulse (as I am similarly forced to suppress the rest of the aspects of my humanity) and await the assault (search) upon my persons (strip-searched) and violation of my property. After a couple of hours the assault hasn't materialize and these storm troopers move on to another dorm to cause more physical and psychological havoc upon the property and minds of other defenseless prisoners. Apparently today's raid was targeted towards a select few sunder rude of a random search. While there is a sigh of relief amongst guys that their contraband won't be discovered and that they won't be put on report. Every prisoner knows all too well, that these momentary reprieves from increased punishment and loss of privileges is short lived. For tomorrow our lives will once again be placed in cruel anxiety and jeopardy, by these slave keepers.

After my dorm is cleared to move around I went over to brotha Sam's room to kill a few minutes and check whether or not he was victimized and to discuss the terrorist psychological ramification of this assault. I hate these racist mad dogs with every fiber of my being. Brotha Sam considers me this mentor as does many other awake,

**Brotha Achim is currently locked up in CDC in Southern California. Brotha Achim is not new to The Beat Within he's an O.G! Brotha Achim always comes with clean detailed writing of what's going down in his life. There's no glory or glamour, he gives it to us raw and uncut with intentions to give us readers a peek at prison life, and believe him not us, it ain't nothing nice! So listen to the game Brotha Achim is spitting. It's more than just words, it's reality.**

progressive prisoners that I counsel and teach "Intellectual Self Defense", counter Terrorist Tactics to imply upon the guards. The key to understanding is to either observe or experience the subject.

The main objective of the guards is to install fear and guilt in their minds, to deny them peace and security within their persons and property as a means of control. To dehumanize and then to animalize prisoners by stripping them of the decency and dignity that engenders their sense or self-worth and self-esteem. It's about chow-time and Brotha Sam and I are directed by the Gestapo to proceed in groups over to the chow-hall since the prison yard is still on lockdown status. The menu for the day is the regular starch, dog-food and soybean filler, another survival meal. Arizona is a right to work state and thus capitalists-pig privatization of the prison food services.

You should see all of these homeless-shelter, welfare recipients the private food service company hires at minimum wages. One poor old lady looks as if she is one day shy of her eightieth birthday. It is pathetic that this is as far as America has come, when hard times hit, return to slavery of the poor, minorities and disadvantaged; this is neo-slavery revisited. Prisoners are searched leaving the chow-hall to prevent them from taking a morsel of food out; today, one prisoner is busted passing over a gram of dope to another prisoner.

After eating we were all marched back to be restricted to the dorm. My head is killing me, the day-to-day continued stress of being held captive living in a cage - mounts to an unbearable level. I take (6) extra-strength Tylenol and lay my body down to take a nap. Forever wishing that by some miracle that a foreign army would come flying over the razor-barb wire fences to rescue and Liberate me; or at least this place of nothingness on the backside of hell would disappear or be destroyed by the time I wake up. Not unlike the wind blowing and the sun shining, when awoken by the increase activities outside of my room about two hours later, this place is still intact and so am I. Prisoners are moving around, it is apparent that the lockdown has been lifted. I get almost happy and then I stop myself with remembrance.

I am once again in this never-ending cruel psychological roller coaster of lockdown and then unlock downs. As we are once again free to move around in the inner circle of the prison like a trained animal. It has been said: to break up an individual, simply take away from him what he or she has taken for granted and then parcel it back to them in teasing dribbles - then all of his psychological energies will be diverted and invested into obtaining what was once his. A heinous form of psychological torture. Like a dog chasing his tail. I fear neither God, man nor death only the continued living as a slave in this racist cemetery called a prison/plantation.

The next day locked down is lifted. Brotha Sam goes over to the phones to call one of his girlfriends and check to hear if she had sent him some money. Part of the survival ritual of a prisoner is using the telephone, begging, cajoling and reasoning with loved ones and friends to send you money of which will allow you to buy decent food to eat. Prison work assignment pay, assuming that you even have a prison work assignment is eight cent, a dime and maybe a

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quarter an hour. It is nearly impossible to survive at any level of minimum human standards solely on prison allowance. Brotha' Sam allows me to talk to his girlfriends; that was a treat to speak to a friendly female voice, to get some attention. I make a few stiff tired jokes and surprisingly get a laugh, then moving on to the case in point: Was she gonna fix me up with one of her girlfriends to write etc? She laughs again, promising she'd do her best.

After our goodbyes are said, Brotha Sam and I resume our daily constitutional walk around the track in this infamous circle. Walking seems to be the prisoners' greatest therapeutic means of relieving stress and dealing with the extreme "unbearable" and "ugliness" of our most unfortunate predicament. Walking further symbolizes a prisoners' conscious and unconscious search for freedom. It is only a short time before we are once again restricted to "our" individual rooms with permission and access only to visit the restrooms and return. Brotha Sam and I compare notes and discuss whether or not his girlfriend will send him money; our conclusion, it was dubious. Receiving money is a constant stress point to augment the dog food being served at the chow-hall.

Having left Brotha Sam to turn in, then making a pit stop at the restroom, washing my hands; I am left with my own unsettling thoughts. For some reason or another my hands never seem to be clean.

I look in my barren locker for a snack and it is empty; then I turn on my television hoping the prison staff censors are feeling charitable and have rented a steamy rated "R" video from the inmate A&R funds for our viewing. I was in luck. Late at night it's usually the most reinvigorating and relaxing, when all is quiet. I've turned in nearly every body position possible, attempting to find a comfortable sleeping position on this sliver of cotton called a mattress; while cursing my captors with the most vile racial and sexual epithet I can think of. I smile to myself and I am off hopefully to an erotic, exciting dream as a free man in a free country.

Some time during the night I was awoken by the most piercing noise I have ever heard. It's a fire alarm. The dorm are ten-fifteen year old wood trailers with rotten plywood, once fully engulfed, it would burn down in less than three minutes: as explained by the fire marshal who had told us prisoners, that when we heard the alarm, we had better get our behinds out.... We didn't dare to take the chance that this was a false alarm (we were also told that we would not be rescued) I nosily staggered outside to stand in the cold morning air. It's a false alarm and once again I return to my worn-harden, one inch mattress to try and get some sleep to calm my stressful-anxiety, to gather enough strength to face another challenging day (either violent or unbearable boredom) in this Abandoned place of NOTHINGNESS.

## Lockdown!

About several-hundred combatants faced each other to engage in a race riot! At the ASPC-Douglas, Gila-yard prison at about 1830 hundred hours (6-20-96). It became obvious that this wasn't to be just another RACE RIOT DRILL! Prison guards began a panicky voice, repeatedly screaming over the P.A. system: LOCKDOWN! LOCKDOWN! RETURN TO YOUR HOUSING! The prisoners were not moving. Assigned to work in the Chapel Office as a clerk, I was alone as I began to gather my belongings to take to my room next door.

Not having a shank (knife or weapon), I tapped two ink pens together and tripled socked my padlock and tied it off. My housing is next door to my work assignment. My thinking was to stand guard next to the Chapel to prevent any of the rioters from entering, by running inside and lock the door. Admitted, my ulterior motive was purely selfish and self-serving. If my place of work was burned (a common tactic, burning down buildings - like these dogs won't rebuild) down or tore up, I would be out of a job and more pointedly: out of a hustle. A job I had admittedly learn to tolerate.

The riot was happening on the opposite side of the yard from where I was standing. Unlike probably many of the human herd of prisoners who had assembled to engage in rioting, I knew exactly what I would do if attacked; I was going to stab, beat and kill (at least ONE) whomever put their hands on me in an act of violence.

I saw about fifty black prisoners at the far end of my "L" shaped housing, yelling out "O.G." (a name given to most all older black prisoners) "Come over here!" Not being one into groups, either for shelter or protection, I hesitated. Then realization that I'd be best suited to lead them if they were attacked. My adrenaline was pumping and my testosterone was at a thunderous peak, I was feeling it ... so I elected to join them.

As soon as I reached the black's position, I could smell and see fear in most their faces. It is both heartrending and nauseously revolting to see fear and terror on the face of

another human being.

I began to calmly speak to the guys and I could sense that these guys were all potential victims in a trance like state awaiting an accident without a clue as to what they should or would do if attacked.

The Mexicans had a seemingly larger number than the whites and they were the aggressors, by jumping on the old wooden bleachers, ripping off rotted planks to be used as weapons. Having acquired substantial weapons, they began to charge into one of the three separate groups of whites. Interesting, that the whites had chosen such an indefensible strategy as to deploy themselves or to allow themselves to be separated into three separate groups; Unless, this division was based on the lines of gang affiliation. The group of whites being charged began to retreat from the Mexicans who were at least three-times their numbers. In what had to be a comical bewildered look the other two groups of whites just watched. In fairness to those whites who didn't come to the aid of their race (other white prisoners being assaulted), the average sane person's psychology is simply not conditioned to readily volunteer to engage in possible life-threatening mass acts of violence. The retreating groups of whites, retreated to the buildings and to the fences.

Fortunately for the retreating whites and everyone concerned, here comes - finally in numbers, the Gestapo, with riot guns on foot, and the gates open and in flies several highway patrol cars with lights and sirens blasting jumping out with shotguns and automatic (truly a sight to see) rifles. Prisoners' weapons are hastily dropped as the front line rioters are being herded off to a holding area, to be transported to prisoners all over the state. Of course the yard is on lockdown status.

In parting - I need tell you, those of you out in the not so free world, these are the combat, mind altering events we are forced to endure in these man made forgotten places of nothingness (sewer disposal). Too many of these daily traumas are permanent, no different than a soldier experiences in combat, battle fatigue; POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS.

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## Peanut

On 6.24.95, death overcame the life of a black prisoner known to me only as "Peanut". While playing basketball in a tournament game/s/ in what had to be the hottest day of the year. Peanut suffered what was initially and unofficially called a massive heart attack. It was later reported that he suffered a heat stroke. After word reached the yard that Peanut had died after having passed out on the basketball court, black prisoners began to congregate in large numbers. It appeared as if blacks were grouping up for a riot, anxious whites and Mexicans were hanging out of the windows and doors watching with tense faces.

Then I noticed three high-ranking prison guards as my two students and I approached. We were told that we [the entire group assembled] would be allowed to remain on the yard during count [of which was fifteen minutes away] and be allowed to view the body before the coroner took Peanut away. While there were low-leveled murmuring that guards and medical staff had allowed Peanut to lay on the ground had provided negligent to inadequate medical treatment; the majority of the group seemed to be calm. In my entire tenure as a captive (POW) never have I witnessed such compassion demonstrated by prison officials over the death of a prisoner, black or white. Obviously, the staff

feared a riot. The Chaplain came along and attempted to get this large group [close to 80% of the black prison population] to interact with him, to say something.

After the first hour of standing under the blazing Arizona sun, the solemn mood of the men began to turn restless and irritable, a potential for violence. I recall as a child hearing older blacks accuse white [doctors and nursed] of deliberately allowing a black person in their care to unnecessarily die, due to negligence and maltreatment. While the body was being brought out, the Chaplain was saying whatever it is religious people say when they walk in front of a procession carrying a dead body. When a prisoner stopped the proceeding along with half of the guys and began to kneel down and pray out loud. The Chaplain, visibly caught off guard, stopped talking, watched and listened and so did my group.

After the praying was over and the body was put in the coroner's little car, the Chaplain advised us that the Warden had authorized a special service at the chapel. More than a few prisoners had something to say, I spoke a few philosophical words, but I was well aware that this group of tearful guys wanted comfort and not unempathetic words of cold truth. Amazing, even in prison among hardened, abandoned human beings, the advent of death is still a commanding performance.



## SHAWN MONTGOMERY

Shawn Montgomery is writing us from Union Correctional Institution in Raiford, FL. Shawn has been a writing great pieces for The Beat Within for a long time now. His topics range from domestic violence to other social issues that plague our communities today. His writing really gets readers to think and also educates them about something they might not know. In this issue he talks about the prison system being nothing but a modern day slavery, dating back to the days when the plantations were still around. He also has a great piece on "Black on black" murder. Read his pieces because he comes with some real knowledge and truth that we hope will challenge you to take a look at yourself, or pick up a pencil and write your own thoughts for our pages.

## It Ain't Pretty

Slavery in America was a big business. Slave masters knew that as well as those who were responsible for its success- both in the Americas as well as those in African Republic who sold their countrymen into bondage.

When we really make an honest attempt to imagine how thousands of Africans were boarded onto slave ships that were headed to the North American continent, shouldn't we have a deeper respect for one another? When we configure how they were "packed like sardines" and forced to lye, sit and sleep in their own feces in the lowest and darkest areas of those ships, shouldn't we place a greater price on our freedom? When we conclude how their journey must have seemed like an eternity to them, not knowing where they were going or for what reason, we should understand the phrase, "jumping ship."

When we think of the sacrifices of pain, life and limb, shouldn't we have more humanity than we do? Oh yes, we sit around the tree, on our telephones, in the beauty and barber shops and "mouth off" about the condition(s) of Black America - we are really living up to the former slave master's dream of a ready, willing and able servant?

"People expect us to be a certain way because we are Black. They expect ghetto mentalities, drugs, and thievery. Both Blacks and Whites think that this is the only way the

Black male is. I'm myself. I like to read, speak standard English, and I'm not into basketball, so the kids in school thought I "acted white", said a student.

It's a sad day when all our children have to hope for is to become the prototype of a different race than their own. Why is that, in this country, when we achieve, we are labeled the Black counterpart of the white race? You know what I'm talking about! But alas, maybe you don't. Achievers like Muhammad Ali, Lorraine Hansberry, Madame C.J Walker, W.E.B. Dubois and countless others attest to "blazing" one's own trail. Each of their records in history speaks for themselves. However, with the exception of "The Greatest," do our children recognize the rest of these influential Black historians?

"Black men have the status of an endangered species. We have no protection in society. Even money doesn't give Black people the power like it does for others." Kuratidisha X. Ali Rashid.

Oh come on, don't act like you don't know! When we understand, we know that for the sake of honor and trust the Black American man is a "diamond in the rough" and no other stone created by God matches its brilliance, fire and/or character. Some of us have dared to look under that proverbial rug and it ain't pretty - same ol' dirt, different broom. Peace Be Unto You.

## Don't Be His Punching Bag

They say that every minute another woman becomes a victim of domestic violence. That means that somewhere right now, there is a woman reading this who's either been abused, is currently being abused, is currently being abused or is anticipating becoming abused in the next sixty seconds. I've always been aware of this type of activity, I was touched personally by it when I was 11 years old. My mother paid the ultimate price for continuing her involvement in an abusive relationship.

Those close to her said that she and her ex-boyfriend had frequent altercations. Police were often called to our residence to resolve late-night disputes. But no one believed that it would eventually end with him taking her life.

That episode had a long lasting affect on my thinking. It made me realize that a person who makes threats of death, can't be taken lightly. It also left me with a low tolerance and a lack of respect for individuals who choose to treat their significant others in such a violent fashion.

Last week I was reminded of my severe distaste for such behavior when I read a story in the newspaper about a mother of four who was killed by an abusive ex-lover. According to the story, his inability to deal with her rejection compelled him to kidnap and beat her to death. Her ordeal, while tragic and horrific, is a textbook example of how ugly things can become when violence is allowed to flourish.

The saddest part about most cases like these is that they can be avoided. Every woman can put off being victimized by paying attention to the details of a man's behavior from the very beginning of their acquaintance. For those woman who don't know what to look for while attempting to figure out their new fling has the propensity to cause severe bodily harm, here are a few red-flags that should concern you.

1. He comes off as a control freak. Most abusive stems from individuals who attempt to impose their will on their victims. When a woman doesn't act according to his demands, the situation often becomes physical.

2. His peers don't respect him. This is one of those things that almost always gets overlooked. Men who seem to be looked down upon by other men, often try to make up for their lowly stature by demeaning someone they feel is inferior.

That someone, is often his girlfriend or wife. His abuse is usually verbal, but it can escalate.

3. He's a coward. A man who won't stand up to another man is dangerous for a woman. He'll usually take out his wimpy frustration on someone weak and vulnerable. Once again that would be. Number 2 and 3 could be the same guy.

4. His past will tell the story. If at all possible check his background. Usually, an abusive person has a history of violent behavior toward women. Talk with some of his ex-girlfriends. They'll tell you everything you need to know.

5. Watch for tears. If a man frequently cries, there is something wrong. These guys are usually emotionally unstable. This is the kind of guy that will knock your head off then beat you to the Kleenex box.

6. Too much of a good thing could be deadly. Every woman that I've ever known, loves a man to shower her with attention. This could be a double-edged sword. It sounds good to receive your man's undivided attention, but when it begins to become too much, be careful. Guys that dote that much on a woman have the potential to become serious stalkers. When the relationship ends, the nightmare begins.

7. Size does matter. This applies to both height and sexual endowment. Men who come up short (no pun intended) in one of these areas tend to be more aggressive than the average male. They can easily offend and that offense can translate into violence.

8. You're smarter than him. Some men just can't take a woman being more intelligent or more successful. This doesn't automatically mean he'll try to hurt you, but if a guy constantly makes an issue or it, his jealousy can easily turn into rage and/or contempt.

9. He's possessive. This could be one of the biggest red-flags. Every woman is already familiar with this type. He tends to cherish anything he feels he owns, including you. You'll know him by this statement, "If I can't have you, nobody will."

10. He strikes you. This should be a no-brainer, but some woman seem to always miss it. The first time a man places his hands on you should be the last. The number one mistake woman make is allowing a man to hit them and then going back. Once you return, it's like you're giving him consent to do it again. And most likely he will.

## Black-On-Black Crime

I know Blacks are being denied justice in the courtrooms across America. I am aware that we, as a race of people, are still the victims of racial prejudice, inferior education, limited opportunities, poor healthcare and economic stability, among other things. We must continue to fight these injustices on every front. We must work to change these conditions as well as diligently work to overcome these conditions and lift our race to a higher level. But let us take a break from these very important Black issues to look at another issue that is greatly affecting our race. That is the issue of "Black-on-Black murder".

More and more, the number of Blacks murdering Blacks continues to grow. In spite of this growing number of Blacks killing Blacks, no one seems to care. No organizations seem to care. There is no organization or a movement against Blacks killing Blacks.

We have an organization or movement to advocate for every issue that affects African American, except Black-on-Black murder. Why is that? Isn't Blacks killing Blacks important? Do we care about African Americans killing African Americans?

If you want to see Black rage, let a policeman or a white

person kill a Black. We are ready to march on the courthouse, Washington and the television station. Let a Black kill a Black and you hardly get a blip on the radar screen from anybody except the murder victim's family. Why is that the case?

Ask yourself, is it the fact that a Black has been killed that upsets and disturbs us or is it who killed a Black that upsets and motivates us to action? In reality, we should be upset whenever a Black is killed, regardless of who did the killing. Not even our Black elected officials seem concerned about Black-on-Black murder. At least not enough to speak out against it; not enough to lead rallies to rebuke these killings and certainly not enough to make it an important issue on legislative agendas across America.

We must learn, understand and believe that if it is disturbing and upsetting when some other race kills a Black, it is just as wrong and upsetting when a Black murders a Black. It makes me want to ask, are we saying it is okay for Blacks to kill Blacks by our silence.

This growing epidemic of Black-on-Black murders is just as important in the lives of Blacks as all the other issues that we are so vocal. Read and listen. The news is filled with items of Black-on-Black murder, but no news of any outcry.

### It's Hard But It's Fair

It's hard, but it's fair and God knows I care  
It's hard but it's fair, I have put up a struggle just to be there  
It's hard but it's fair, God is everywhere  
It's hard but it's fair, He had been with me through it all  
It's hard but it's fair, God help me to see my wake up call  
It's hard but it's fair, I have learned from all my down falls  
It's hard but it's fair, being locked up behind these walls  
It's hard but it's fair when you don't have no one  
on the streets to call  
It's hard but it's fair, the suffering will always be there  
It's hard but it's fair, the pain I can always feel  
It's hard but it's fair, I been away from my mother for so  
many years  
It's hard but it's fair, I lost so many tears  
It's hard but it's fair, I been fighting for so many years  
It's hard but it's fair, at times no one seemed to want to  
be there  
It's hard but it's fair, I almost lost my mind  
It's hard but it's fair because God he was there  
It's hard but it's fair because I am living to see another day  
It's hard but it's fair because I have faith when I pray  
It's hard but it's fair because I believe in myself each day  
It's hard but it's fair because I search for the path  
that would lead me the right way  
It's hard but it's fair.

### Thank You

Thank you for this moment  
Thank you for the sunshine  
Thank you for the fresh air  
Thank you for your care  
Thank you for the testing  
Thank you for the blessing  
Thank you for the meals  
Thank you for letting me live  
Thank you for each day  
Thank you for listening to me when I pray  
Thank you for not taking my breath away  
Thank you letting your word be guide to me each day  
Thank you for the water I drink  
Thank you for the positive thoughts I think.

### Fresh Start

Well I am still living to see another day, which is a fresh start  
Each day that is blessed to me is used as a fresh start  
To renew my mind and soul  
A fresh start to gain control of my life  
A fresh start, to get my life right with God  
A fresh start to see all my past mistakes for what they worth  
A fresh start at being a better person  
A fresh start at being a leader  
A fresh start at loving my enemies as I love myself  
A fresh start at always respecting myself, so I would  
always have respect for others  
A fresh start at giving freely from the heart  
A fresh start at setting higher goals for myself  
A fresh start at getting an education  
A fresh start at keeping it real with myself, so I could  
always keep it real with others  
A fresh start at believing in myself, and being all I can be  
A fresh start at taking up my own responsibility and  
being responsible for my own action  
A fresh start with fresh opportunities.

Michael McKinney is writing us from the Union Correctional Institution in Raiford, Florida. Michael has been writing to the Beat Within for a while now. He's no stranger and his writing is immaculate. His writing really expresses how he feels and how he deals with the fact that he's locked up. It's a constant battle for anybody to stay positive in such a negative place. But Michael stays stronger than the bricks that contain him and keeps it positive with a will to survive and do better!

### Building A Relationship With God

This has been a very hard task for me to do because every day I had to struggle with my sin. And I always had to struggle real hard with building me a lasting relationship with God. And when I say lasting relationship, I don't mean a relationship what would last one month with God, or one year with God, then turn my back on him and go back to my old ways. I wanted to be with God everyday. I wanted to walk with God everyday. I wanted to talk to God everyday. I wanted to pray with God everyday. I wanted to trust in God everyday. I wanted to have faith in God everyday. I wanted to love God everyday. And this is what having a lasting relationship with God was to me.

And there have been times when I would have an ongoing relationship with God. By reading the bible everyday and praying everyday and by doing this would make faith in God grow. But the hardest thing for me to do was to keep my relationship with God. Because here in prison when most convicts who don't know any better see me on the path of having a good spiritual relationship with God, they think that is a weakness or they go to feeling like I done got weak. And I always had a big ego that was very hard for me to keep in check. Because my heart did not want to fall back into that old way of living, because this prison environment is filled with so much deception and temptation to do wrong. But no matter how many times I stumble along the way, I will always keep faith in God.



### My Will To Survive

I do have a strong will to survive because my will has been put to the test so many times. So I do know for a fact, that I have a very strong will that has helped me survive through so many things. And my will has stood through tests of time and if it would have not been for my strong will to survive, I would have been lost my mind years ago. There have been times and situations that made me feel as if I did not want to live anymore. But my will to survive is what kept me alive, and on to strive for equality and justice.

All of my life I have struggled against injustice, from a kid to a man, all my life I had to take a stand for my rights and the rights of others. And my stand was to gain respect, and to be treated like a human being, and my will to survive through prison trials and hardships. And it's really not about what we go through in life that counts. Having a strong will to survive is all what counts. And this locked down one-man cell situation that I have been trapped up in for years has made my will ever so strong to survive this and more.

*All of my life I have struggled against injustice, from a kid to a man, all my life I had to take a stand for my rights and the rights of others.*

### Concrete Walls

I live within these concrete walls. They hold me in this four-walled cell with a locked steel door. These concrete walls are built as if they are not going to fall. They are hard, and these concrete walls are made to hold the hardest, the toughest, and the meanest of all kind. And these concrete walls are made to hold you for a great number of years, if you are always acting hard. But I had to learn the hard way behind these concrete walls.

It was not always about being hard. It was also about learning how to be smart because these concrete walls was not going to break they was not going to fall. And these concrete walls was just not just made to hold you incarcerated. There was something else special about these concrete walls, there was more good to them then there was bad. When I first got locked up behind these concrete walls, I thought this situation was going to be all bad because I did not like the fact of being locked behind concrete walls 24 hours a day, just about every day because at that time I did not know the art of doing time and not let time do me.

I had not yet learned how to use the time behind concrete walls to my advantage. And being behind these concrete walls gave me time to think about so much, time to think about things I never took into consideration when I was running around like a chicken with my head cut off. And being behind these concrete walls taught me how to be alert and how to be aware of things that's around me. Being behind these concrete walls gave me time to learn how to use my mind to make sense out of my life and experience.

### My Will To Do Better

My will to do better is sometimes strong  
My will to do better at times breaks weak  
My will to do better is something I will always keep  
My will to do better is instilled in my mind  
My will to do better, will never be left behind  
My will to do better is a blessing from God  
My will to do better is a big start  
My will to do better keeps me fighting to see another day  
My will to do better makes me get on my knees to pray  
My will to do better has been one of my best friend  
My will to do better will never come to an end  
My will to do better helps to dig within myself  
To bring out all the best of what's left  
My will to do better is what I have much faith in  
My will to do better keeps me away from sin  
My will to do better makes me strive to win  
My will to do better

### As My Mind Turn

As my mind turn, my thoughts are like a whirlpool. As my thinking keeps me in school learning all about how my minds is a valuable tool that should always be used. And the mind I have, I don't want to waste it. As my mind turns and my thoughts are saying if I only knew how much of my mind was a gift that can help my life come thorough and make all my dreams come true. And mind over matter has helped me too.

I have struggles very hard in order to gain control over my mind because strong minds now days are hard to find. And a strong mind is what makes the best of mankind. As my mind turn, my thoughts become my main concern, with that I think about because we are what we think. Because if I think down of myself, then my life would be down, but if I think high of myself, then my life would be high.

As my mind turns, I can't let my thoughts play tricks on me, my powerful mind is what I will always be. And I will always let my mind set good values for me.

### Never Give Up

I will never give up  
It's not in my blood  
It's not what I love  
I will never give up, I will never give out  
I will never give in  
As long as I got God on my side as my friend  
My number one friend  
I will never give up because a hard situation is not the end  
It's only a moment of tests that will always be there  
I will never give up, that won't be fair because I do care  
I will not give up because everything I have been through  
has been a blessing to me  
It has helped me to be the strong spiritual warrior that I  
am right now today  
I will never give up because if I did give up in this  
struggle  
I would not just be giving up on myself  
I would also be giving up on all the one's who believe in me  
I will never give up because I cannot let people down.

### **A Grandmother's Love**

A grandmother's love  
Is a love sent from God above  
A grandmother's love is unconditional  
Because you love me no matter what anyone says  
I can talk to you about anything  
And for you I would do anything  
Whenever I'm down you know how to lift me up  
That's why I care about you  
That's why I love you so much  
Grandmother you're love has touched me in so many ways  
So keep loving me in so many ways  
Now I know for certain your love is from above  
Nothing can replace a grandmother's love.

Our friend Curtis Cook is back! Curtis delivers his insights from a correctional facility in Selma, Alabama, and has become a reliable contributor to The Beat Within for the past several issues. He even has his brother writing for The Beat Within! Here's a few poems that Curtis would like to share with us readers.

### **In My Dream**

I want you to think of me every night  
Just to focus on me I will direct your heart  
I will show you all the things love is made of  
Look for me when life has dealt you a bad hand  
Look for no other know in your heart that I'm your man  
My masculine arms will protect you from all danger  
Hidden, and unseen I'm truly in love with you  
We make love every night in my dream.

### **You're My Angel**

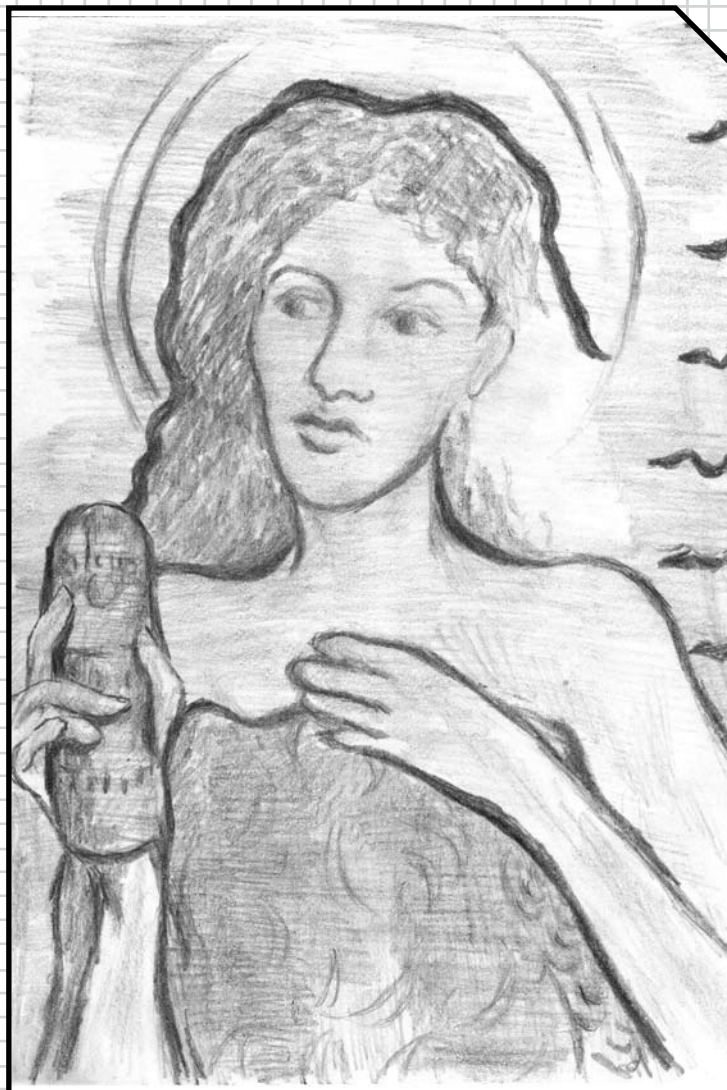
Sometimes I just sit and think  
About all the love  
We made in the past  
I thought our love would last  
So what would it take to make  
Things right again  
You are my lover  
But you are also my best friend  
Nothing could separate  
Me from the power of your love  
We were made for each other  
You're my angel from above

### **Never Lose Sight**

Come to me my lady  
Bring you sexy body, and irresistible charm  
Take me, hold me  
Be my shelter in time of storm  
Teach me to love  
And to never hate  
Hold me close to your breasts  
And keep me safe  
Tell me the truth  
With no lies attached  
Make my dreams come true  
Let you body relax  
Handle me as you will  
You can be rough if you like  
Look deep into my eyes  
And never lose sight

### **You Treat Me Like A King**

The memory of you still occupies my mind  
All the intimate times we shared  
All the love, and joy I remember so well  
I'm love sick, and love crazy  
You are the one for me my one and only lady  
There are very bright days in our forecast  
A poetic vision of a love  
That will always last  
So let my words thrive in your heart  
Because nothing, I mean nothing  
Could ever pull our love apart  
Our love will flourish like dogwoods of the spring  
I'm proud to have such a woman like you  
Because you treat me like a king.



### **The End**

The mystery of the mind  
The time at hand  
Stands still for a while  
But the world keeps moving  
Everything's groovy when life begins  
But no one wants  
To face the end



### I For An Eye

There's good and there's bad  
There's real and fad  
The inferior year  
Man why so queer  
Thee superior sneer, leer,  
So damn mad while the  
righteous just clap, snap,  
now let's cheer  
The blood in my veins  
These walls can't contain  
My body they hold it, but  
can't told it  
They scold it and throw it  
Yet to be slain  
So I reign while chained

But man, I hold it  
I rein it  
I ain't it  
Eye for an eye  
I've shed them  
I've bled them  
I've fed them lies  
Why? Cause they feed  
them to me, see lies  
They come and they go,  
they flow, they don't die  
We multiply, millions and  
strong  
Long throngs continued  
doing time, but we will live  
on.

**Cristobal Bazan is writing us from a correctional center in Amarillo, Texas. Cristobal is locked up, but has hope and is still hanging on that he will see the free world. Cristobal says he doesn't have many educational achievements, but he does have the greatest achievement of all, and that's the achievement of being free of the mind and spirit through his writings.**

### To The Beat: An Update

You know my greatest achievement was waking up this morning to live another day. It's so easy to go, especially this day and age when so many are dying daily. I have no G.E.D., no diplomas, no certificates-nothing! I've been in and outta the system since I was a child. I now find myself confined to a cell 24 hours a day, everyday, cause I can't seem to get along with others. I'm on what's called administrative segregation. So far me to get the upper hand on this psychological warfare is definitely an achievement. I've seen so many die in here and I refuse to let the system break me...

You have to understand there's an American agenda. Now whoever is voted into office wont make much of a difference. Sure, colors and genders might differ, but not much will "change." Look at the Kennedy's, they went against the grain: assassinated. A very good example was set there. Politicians of the upper crust will not do much for us that are in the belly of the beast. We smell the stench; we feel the hunger; and we churn the belly. What's old is deep, and what's deep is strong: Racism is old, deep, and strong in this country. They aint ready for a Chicano or Black president...

If we, the disenfranchised could vote, we wouldn't make a major difference; we'd have a major impact in regards to voter turnout, but all we'd be doing is putting the same kind of folks in power again.

We the people have the power invested in us to make the difference, along with an impact. I slang and I bang, and I'm proud of who I am, but as long as we're divided, there's no way we can fight it with closed fists.

### Still Hangin' On

These walls are thick with the atmospheres cold  
We're lit with the sick and fit with the throwed  
When the winds all blow, we know, we've been snowed

All these lies, the why's, these questions we throw  
They're blocked by the cops, they're covered by snow  
We must grow and show, cause these times are cold

No mercy, nor passion, the hatred shows  
I freeze in this breeze, I'm sick with the throwed  
The climate will change, but this world's still cold  
I've been snowed by the highers  
I'm so throwed I conspire  
Cold and so bold, barely hanging on to the wire.

*...we'd have a major impact in regards to voter turnout, but all we'd be doing is putting the same kind of folks in power again.*

### Children At War

I watch as  
Big government fight over ships and planes  
Gangsters fight over whips and chains  
Make or take, rubber bands or dust  
We trust politicians  
Troops meet with morticians  
Everybody speaks of peace  
It seems the only peace  
It seems the only peace  
They find is on the hip  
Fighting over a title  
A flag or so rag  
Money makin' machines  
Street generals or politicians  
Cronies, customers, or lobsters  
You get what you pay for  
And we the people re-elected  
A crack smoking mayor  
Guns, drugs, and money  
Yet we arrest the graffiti sprayer.

### KURTIS NEWILL

**Kurtis Newill is writing us from a Correctional Facility in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania. Kurtis Believes in himself and his bright future. He also believes in venting out through his writing. It took us a while to publish your writing Kurtis but it's here! Keep them coming.**

### I Believe

Lord I'll never question why  
Please forgive me for getting by  
Know in my heart I tried  
And form my soul I cried  
I never moved mountains  
But I threw pennies in the fountains  
I can't escape my past  
But I build the foundation  
For a future that will last  
I need you in my life  
Like I need love  
When push come to shove  
I know you've got my back  
If I've got to rack and leave  
Never will I grieve  
I know you never let me down  
And I believe.

## The Trapped Hell Intruder

Angry and frustrated with my finger trembling on the trigger  
Thinking to myself, "Do I really want to become a killer?"  
Ten bullets in the chamber with a pair of confused looking eyes  
Wondering will I have enough time to flee before the cops arrive  
My arm is straight as an arrow and my gun is three inches above his ear  
His arms are still above his head and I can clearly smell his fear  
My conscience became overpowered by the demonic voices in my head  
I wonder where would I hide him, in his closet or beneath his bed?  
My ears are still distracted from the loud and disturbing house alarm  
They sound like grey vicious wolves, more like a tornado siren horn  
The sound of that annoying alarm didn't make it any better  
I could already hear the maggots and flies gathering together  
My mind is twisted like a cyclone and I no longer have any time to waste  
We both are nervous as can be and sweat is pouring down our face  
"Enough!" I made my decision, he will soon be deceased  
And I will soon be at home watching TV and relieved  
Slowly I tightened the trigger with my trembling and worn finger  
This will be something that I will always remember  
I slowly pulled the trigger, waiting to hear a loud bang  
"Click, click, click," I didn't hear a thing  
Dammit, my gun was jammed; there wasn't a thing I could do now,  
I know I can make it out of this house, but I just wondered how suddenly I ran through the hallway, attempting to dash out the door  
All I remembered was him drawing from his pocket before I hit the floor  
Pain rushed down my spine and chills quickly rushed through my head  
And blood poured down my neck,  
It was a glossy and shiny color red  
Well, that's why I'm surrounded in flames,  
I knew I took the wrong route  
But I'm afraid it's too late because my soul will forever be trapped

*I slowly pulled the trigger, waiting  
to hear a loud bang  
"Click, click, click,"  
I didn't hear a thing  
Dammit, my gun was jammed; there  
wasn't a thing I could do now,*

Kadaris Cook, the 15 year old brother of Curtis, is writing from Wetumpka, Alabama. Kadaris is a talented writer and he's only fifteen years old. I know Curtis is very proud of Kadaris and from the looks of Kadaris' writing, he has reason to be! Welcome, Kadaris!

## If A Gun Could Talk

Some say I'm very fatal because I took many down  
Usually my victims don't last after the first round  
I have many characteristics like my color and my size  
I just love to take them out with a great surprise  
I left many bloody sights and bodies scattered on the ground  
Enemy bodies are still missing and will never be found  
Some let me get the best of them and they commit suicide  
Because of me some went to court and testified  
I am used worldwide and I am greatly respected  
I blast on the weak when I'm least expected  
You have to be very careful when you play this game  
I even had the most top-feared drug lords in pain  
I am used by criminals and also the police  
I don't care who uses me, I just want to blow your brains to pieces  
I left many unsolved mysteries and unsolved cases  
My victims are usually found in unusual places  
I love no one but the person who's pulling my trigger  
Staring down my barrel just makes people shiver  
Many that used me are either dead or in jail  
And some are burning right now in hell  
My mighty power is guaranteed to leave you underground  
I even annihilated kings and conquered their crowns  
If you disobey me you will be outlined in chalk  
And this is what I would say if a gun could talk.

## Dangerous Love

The love we shared will never exist again  
It hurts so badly as if the world was coming to an end  
I take a moment with myself to think back in time  
I really wish that she were still mine  
I think about when she left me the hateful words she said  
Now demonic thoughts go in and out of my head  
I'm thinking things I never thought before  
Banging my head on the wall, not wanting to hear anymore  
My eyes are full of tears so I can't see  
It's like I'm turning into something I don't want to be  
Now I want her more than ever and I have no choice  
My conscience started to work,  
but the whisper says, "Ignore that voice."  
I close my eyes and I slowly count to five  
I want her in my arms even if she is dead or alive  
She has no clue death will visit her soon  
I sneaked up behind her while she was asleep in the bedroom  
I silently put the barrel of my gun to her brain  
Finally the moment I have been waiting for has come  
Suddenly I heard a more mighty voice; it sounded like God  
And I turned the gun around to myself and committed suicide

### Night's Passion

I never notice your presence until you appear right  
before my eyes  
You let me know I'm not alone, you let me know you're  
by my side  
As a child I used to be afraid of you  
and never thought you would be a friend  
Because so many people say that night brings horrible  
monsters, but you only make me grin  
I only get about nine hours of your company each and  
every day  
You never failed to visit me, so in my heart is where you  
will stay  
I love when you take your fingers  
and calmly run them through my hair  
That lets me know, even while I'm asleep that you are  
still there  
She never talks very much, no more than letting out a  
low whistle  
And I love when stars shoot through your atmosphere  
like ultra speed missiles  
Sometimes I miss when you are gone,  
but then I remember you will be back soon  
But I keep my faith  
that you will come back and also bring back the moon  
I can't resist how you cuddle up with me and let me  
know everything is okay  
You said you would still remain with me, even after my  
body decays  
I love when you wrap your arms around me  
and slowly rock me to sleep  
I know I'm only human, but still my love for you runs  
deep  
As long as you care and promise me  
that you will be there every night  
'Cause I really feel that you are real and together we can  
destroy the light.

### Alone

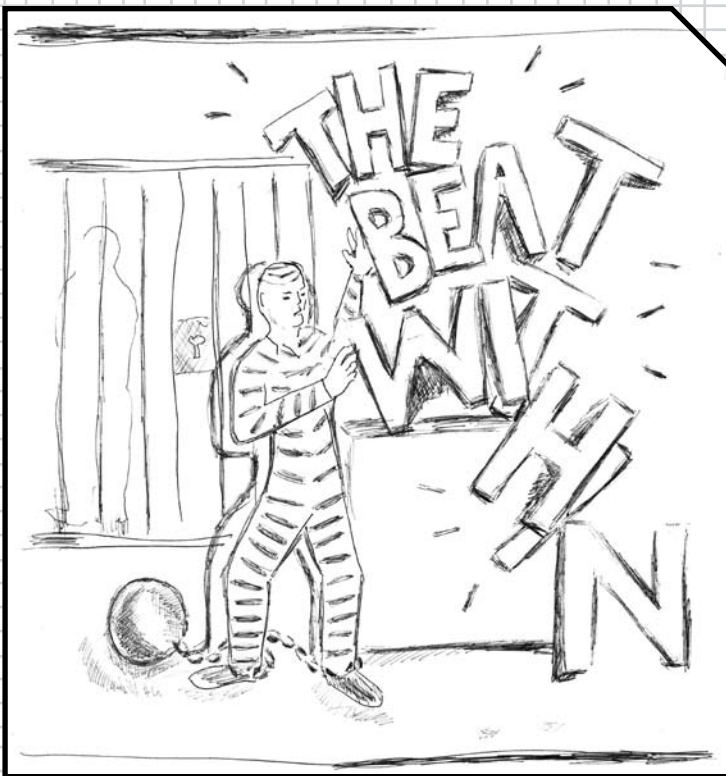
Alone for many years wandering the cemetery  
Wondering will she ever get a visit from relatives  
Her body has disintegrated, but in her mind she still  
lives  
Frightened by human kind when sighted glowing in the  
hills  
She glides through the grave site with an ultra bright  
glow  
Her dress dances from the force of a silent wind blow  
When midnight comes she rests her head upon a small  
stone  
Weeping in sadness because she's tired of being alone  
Her dress comes down over her feet with a vanilla white  
color  
And her beautiful eyes are bright and blue like ocean  
water  
I spotted her beauty when I was out wandering the night  
I couldn't resist her beauty as I got closer to her light  
She doesn't talk very much because she's very shy  
This is the lady whom I want to be with until I die  
She finally has a friend and a true friend forever  
And never will she be alone because we will always be  
together

### The Man On The Moon

The man on the moon walks every night  
Never wish to meet him, he's a horrible sight  
Only once out of a century he will visit the earth  
Incapable of controlling his blood thirst  
It's only a dream, a myth, more like a Goosebumps story  
So there's nothing to be afraid of and three's no need to worry  
But please flee away if you see a mysterious light  
Because the man on the moon walks every night

### Wishing You Were Here

Sometimes when you are gone I think about you  
There's not a night that goes by without me wishing you  
were here My mind won't let me believe the fact that you  
are gone  
But I believe and trust that one day, you will be back  
home  
My heart will be with you, wherever you go  
So when you think you are alone, I am right there with  
you  
I know in the past we had differences,  
but you are more than a friend  
So if you need any help, I will help you fight until the  
end  
And everything will be okay because God is right by your  
side  
It seems that we grew up so quick and I often miss the  
past  
Sometimes I have to let a tear drip down my dark shiny  
eyes  
Because for someone you really love, you are never too  
tough to cry And if I was in the same situation, I know  
you would cry for me  
You're never too grown up to cry and I'm not ashamed to  
say it.  
And everything will be okay if we're always there for  
each other  
Because there's nothing in the world like there is a big  
brother.



### Hope

Hope rains in a myriad of colors  
 A rainbow in a kaleidoscope  
 Most see their happiness in dollars,  
 While others lose themselves in dope.  
 Life catapults us with a scruffy hand  
 Sometimes it's smooth as sand;  
 At others, smothering until the end  
 An end one cannot comprehend  
 Yet forced to stand.  
 It helps to have God as a friend  
 The difference in life and death is just a hair's strand.

I'm confident that "life in prison" saved me from certain death in the free world. My grandma often repeats the Russian proverb, "Only a casket will straighten out a hunchback", to which I'd like to add, "Or a long prison term". Then again, what do I know?

Life is a battle to the finish, whether on this or that side of the barbed wire. Better men than I have done years in the joint, have had all the "right answers" completed at the nick-knack programs, courses, seminars, and then crashed head-first once they got a whiff of freedom. Life is a flight to the finish, and it's an unpopular fact that for many of us prison is an asylum from our own destructive behavior. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it!

Forgive me, but I don't expect you to live off someone else's bread. My experience differs from most people, and no matter how many "great" and "touching" stories we encounter on the pages of The Beat Within, when the magazine is closed, we all are forced to deal with our own particular reality, our own cases, sentences, pasts, presents, and the uncertainties attached to our future. And I'm not even touching the relational aspect of our lives - - the real quagmire for most of us: our inability to get along with others, to cope within our families, to be responsible in anything. God bless David Keeton for his "Cause and Effect, Mind Pollution" article in issue 13.10! In attempting to solve the prevalent "gang problem" he doesn't blame "Whitey," "The Man," or the government, but places the primary responsibility on the parents.

What is unique about that (for those fortunate enough to have parents who are not in prison, strung out; or those who are not being groomed in group homes) is that it's not secret that a strong family is the best form of gang prevention! Yes, there are many exceptions, and we recognize that street gangs are more than a "social phenomena" or whatever. This is a social problem - - affecting the entire community in every

Mikhail Markhasev is back and to our liking! Mikhail has been a Beat favorite for years and having him deliver stellar contributions as a weekly contributor is a blessing to us all! In his latest piece, he describes as life being a battle to the finish. Indeed it is, as we all make important choices everyday that will affect our future. Listen to Mikhail and his powerful words! Mikhail is writing us from Corcoran State Prison in Corcoran, Ca.

way - - but it is primarily a breakdown in the family. Anyone familiar with what happens in the ghetto (or anywhere there are gangs) understands that gangs are a substitute for a family, an alter-reality that's been twisted and warped, but a REALITY nonetheless. It cannot be simply dismissed or swept under the rug...

The police raids, which simply take the "exterminator" approach, and evict, dismantle, chase, and destroy - - as though gangs are nests of cockroaches, and not the most natural expressions of widespread social cancers - - fail to deal with the essential social issues which give births to gangs, drugs, violence, and every form of lawlessness. This is an extremely complex and troubling topic, so I'll step down to a more important question, albeit a simpler one.

This is directed to David Keeton, but also to Ray Sanchez Jr. - - who I know is qualified to answer it because he lived through this question. All three of us are lifers, and have experienced both the perks of the juvenile justice system, and its adult counterpart. Look around. Prison yards are getting younger and younger, filling up with young adults outrageous and draconian sentences - - long enough to guarantee that our steel and concrete cities will be brimming "on full" for decades and decades to come.

What do you do with these "kids"? Once "prevention" has gone down the drain, helped among by Prop. 21 and our human laws, what can (or should) be done with the youth teeming within the prison walls? Who are we to anyone other than their older homeboys (until it's too late), and don't really care until this becomes their own reality, or the scrubs all around us, who have thrown in the towel on life, and have settled for a "houseplant" existence of the typical institutional "bread and circus" sideshow?

Well, I thought it was a single question, but I've managed to babble into an entire paragraph. Please bare with me. Anyone who wants to take a stab at it is welcome. By the way, the last thing I'm insinuating or recommending is for anyone to get on top of a soapbox in the middle of the yard, and begin with a "Hear ye! Hear ye! I have a plan, so follow me into the Promised Land!" Let's be realistic here without becoming a romantic. There's a place for romantics, and it's called State Mental Hospital at Atascadero.

May the Lord, in His grace and power, keep everyone.

### So What?!

Have you been there, done that?  
 Lived with your pockets fat?  
 Been to the top, conquered the world?  
 Swimming in gold and stories untold?  
 So what! At the end of that mirth  
 There is only six feet of earth!

### I Want To See Beauty

Untarnished, pristine  
 Though tempered by life,  
 Though mangled, it's seen  
 A forest once stood  
 Where today is charred wood:  
 Life and destruction, evil and good  
 Locked in a death match, they battle in strife,  
 But smoldering embers prophecy life...

### Learning The Truth

Simple truth I have learned,  
 Nothing that will amaze  
 When I stand before God at the end of my days  
 Only then will I know condemnation or praise.

Another word I need to keep,  
 To keep me from demise:  
 My sin is not being a sheep,  
 But trying to be wise...

### Thought I Knew

Youth was full of zeal and brief  
 It faded like an autumn leaf  
 I thought I truly knew  
 Of life a thing or two  
 But none of it was true.

## How I Started My Journey

There's a proverb which says, "Even a fool is counted wise when he hold his peace" (Pro.17:28). I need to heed it more often, rather than opening my mouth and "removing all doubt". In my previous BW piece I commented on some issues about which I should have remained silent; and so this time I hope to write about the only thing I'm qualified to write about: my own personal experience, and whatever may be drawn from it, for better or for worse.

Lord, your ways are not those of men,  
 You made us for an eternity's span.  
 What we think we know and what we see  
 Is less than what's known to the tiniest flea.

I was born and raised in a country that no longer exists: the Soviet Union. The world and social structure, which I knew, has been wiped off the face of history in the early 1990's, but that's not important. When, at the age of ten, I was told that we're packing our bags and shaking the spot for sunny America, I was angry and heartbroken. I hated the USA, and the entire "capitalist pigs" Western landscape, and was taught to hate by the prevalent Soviet propaganda, indoctrinated in school, through the media, books, and everything else that was made in the USSR. And so, when I found out that we're "defecting to the enemy" I cried and felt like a traitor.

We left as refugees, Motherland stripped us of our Soviet citizenships, and I still held a grudge against that slimy Uncle Sam until...I walked into a "Ralph's" supermarket on Poinsettia and Sunset Blvd, in Los Angeles, and saw more food than my ten-year-old imagination could have conceived in a Soviet lifetime. But, that's more another story.

Yeah, I became a "capitalist pig" myself, shaking loose my "Evil Empire" allegiance for a stack of food stamps and welfare benefits, along with MediCal. I couldn't figure out: Why in the world is Uncle Sam dishing out free money to people from an enemy state? My great-grandmother, Maria, who had survived a civil war, two World Wars, Joseph Stalin's reign of terror, and ended up outliving the mighty USSR, was suddenly receiving SSI benefits, though she hadn't worked a day in America...

Well, I wasn't told about any of this in the Soviet propaganda movies, where the only things we saw were the labor strikes, fire hoses aimed at Black protestors in Alabama, and other forms of Western debauchery, like a young Vietnamese girl running down a dirt road, naked, with

here skin burned off by a napalm bomb. To my shock, with time, I saw some of the same images on American T-V! This has to be understood in the light of the fact that no Soviet channel showed the Siberian mass graves of old Stalinist "labor camps", that in the history books we, the communist state, were always the best, the most humane, the defenders of the little guys all over the world.

It was very painful for me to accept the sad fact that most of what I was fed in my first ten years was a bunch of lies. I began to understand this even before we left the USSR, but my simple, idealistic heart couldn't fathom that we all had been living a lie. Thus was formed a void in my soul, a void that manifested itself in the land of milk and honey, on the streets of California, where during my teens I turned to gangs, drugs, and my own madness, in order to "get in where I fit in".

As the structured society built on B.S. was crumbling across the Atlantic Ocean, and as people were splitting from the Soviet Union quicker than rats off a sinking ship, my own little world was preparing to experience an upheaval - self-inflicted and other-wise - that would not only sink my "American Dream," but take others down with me.

We landed in Los Angeles on August 17th, 1989, as I a scrawny square from Eastern Europe - beheld from above the endless sea of light which was to be my home for the next nine years. On August 17, 1998, I took my last ride on the county bus, from the Santa Monica Superior Court back to the Central Jail. We took the streets, listened to "Mega Oldies", and I said goodbye to Los Angeles after being sentenced to life imprisonment without possibility of parole. Less than a week later I was in Ad-Seg, in Delano, with no clue as to where I would end up.

'Till next time

History repeats itself  
 Not that it matters  
 We're born and live and die  
 Time gives and takes and scatters  
 Blessed are the blind  
 To what is outside  
 Who in themselves abide  
 Who savor life's abating tide  
 And other shores don't try to find  
 But who find God  
 And in Him hide  
 Who is the truth and source of life  
 Until the waves of life subside!

## Pure

As the grace in the face of a newborn is seen  
 So are the hearts that are pure, precious, and pristine  
 Couldn't wait to grow up, now can't wait to return  
 To the way that I was after being just born.

## A Fool Without Patience

Patience didn't possess, but wanted to rule  
 For the soul cared not, but had passion as fuel  
 Galloped through will the zeal of a careless fool  
 Till experience showed I'm no horse but a mule!

## I Failed

I failed to contemplate the cost  
 I failed to see, although I tried  
 I rolled the dice and sadly lost  
 I yearned to live, yet somehow died  
 I tried to navigate my soul  
 I sought and fought without a goal  
 I am no shepherd, but a sheep  
 And so, O'Lord, my soul to keep!

## To Be a Fool

It's hard to say how I got here:  
 Was in my courage or my fear?  
 Am I plain stupid or sublime?  
 Or living on God's borrowed time?

I never though that I'd get caught  
 I stole and murdered—and for what?  
 God wanted me to be a man,  
 To be a fool is what I sought...

**“I’m Chillin’ With That East Bay Feeling”**

“How are you all down there, good I hope? As for me I’m sitting, in my cell in the belly of the beast aka Tracy prison, C.D.C. As I sit here in this cell alone on “New Years” which to me seem like just another day. I read these pieces of many individuals: Vincent, Brandi, Young Cato, HK, Drewski, Fireball, Lil’ Jamar, and both Beezy baby’s. These are names of several youngstas, as well as myself that I look forward to readin’ in each issue.

There’s one thing I’ve realized out of many pieces most of these cats keep writing about. How they’re acknowledging how they know they’ve done wrong, but what gets me is why do we forget this all when we hit the streets? As we’re sittin’ in bookin’ waitin’ to get processed we ask our self “ what am I doin’ back here?”

The same faces, yet it’s just a different day, same program. When the Holidays come around you don’t have the Halloween or Christmas spirit or whatever the holiday may be it’s just another day, for us but it comes with the Game. It’s the rules of the Game that each and every one of us chose to play. I was once told “ How can you hate something you chose to play?” Don’t get mad when you put your hand over a flame and are burnin’ with pain I constantly ask myself why?”

Why do I continue to play this game if I know where I’m gonna end up in the long run? That’s dead or where I’m at now. And I come up with the same answer each time, that is some of us were born in this game and some of us are just knuckleheads. But it’s not the people or the environment. It’s about the lifestyle we love to live. So ask yourself who’s fault is it? Who got you in here? You did, whether it was yourself or your supposedly “best homie” ratted you out to “the boys”.

Either way it was your fault, that’s just how you got caught. Something I learned out of the times I’ve been in Juvenile Hall to Boys Ranches to Group homes County Jails to Branch to State Prison is that the only real friend you have or can count on is yourself. Now some of you may say that your homie’s gonna always be there or that they’re true. But how do you really know how far that person will go till he or she bounces on you? So to you who say you have a real friend how do you know when they’re truly real? You don’t.

Well I’m out for now. I send mines to everyone in each correctional facility and all my people’s from “ Fremont” to “Newark” to “Hayward” to “The Town” to “Sac” I’m out you know who this be.

John Tabamantes is writing to us from a Deul Vocational Institution in Tracy, Ca. John has a few pieces he wants to share with us and some pretty good advice for all you youngsters out there. He talks about his life, and asks a very important question that everyone should have an answer for. “Why do you play the game if you know where you’re gonna end up in the long run?” Why do people do the things they do knowing that they can end up in jail for a long time, or dead? It’s all in the lifestyle you love to live, right? And we all talk about change when we’re inside of jail but then we forget about all of that as soon as we hit the streets. Well listen up to the homie John talk he has a few good points that y’all should listen to.

**Warped And Twisted**

Harsh words and violent blows  
 Hidden secrets that nobody knows  
 Eyes are open-hands are fisted  
 Deep inside I’m warped and twisted  
 So many tricks and so many lies  
 To many when’s and to many why’s  
 Nobody special and nobody gifted  
 It’s just me warped and twisted  
 Sleepin’ awake chokin’ on a dream  
 Listen loudly to a silent scream  
 Call my mind though unlisted  
 Last in someone so warped and twisted  
 On my knees alive but dead  
 Look at the invisible blood I’ve bled  
 I’m not gone my mine just drifted  
 Don’t expect much cause I’m warped and twisted  
 I’m burnt out, wasted, empty and hallow  
 Today is just yesterday’s tomorrow  
 The sun has died, ashes shifted  
 I’m still here warped and twisted.

**Never**

Never say I Love you  
 If you don’t really care  
 Never talk about feelings  
 If they aren’t really there  
 Never hold my hand  
 If you are going to break my heart  
 Never say your going to  
 If you don’t plan to start  
 Never look into my eyes  
 If you plan to lie  
 Never say Hello  
 If you really mean goodbye  
 Never say forever  
 ‘Cause forever makes me cry



**Untitled**

For every name  
 Permanently etched onto your flesh  
 Your loyalty to men  
 Exists but in hell

For every tear drop  
 And drop of blood  
 To ever moisten your cold, hard face  
 I know that you  
 Will never understand pain  
 Not mine  
 Not even your own

I have felt your embrace  
 And I reject you for it  
 For you have let me in,  
 Into your heart  
 Only to keep me away,  
 Away from your mind

For every bit of better  
 You have promised to make me  
 I still carry this symptom:  
 I cannot leave you  
 My sickness  
 Is that you will not leave me

For all the green  
 And all the beautiful colors  
 Sown throughout your gardens  
 You are a pollution unto this earth  
 I despise you!

When we read our young Beat writers telling us that they will always "be down" for this or that cause, that they will "never" change, we remind them that change is a certainty in all our lives. The only question is whether you initiate it or some stranger forces it on you. Michael Cabral, writing from — and to — his Salinas Valley Prison Cell, makes the case far better than we in this work titled "Untitled." Here, in unflinching and painful poetry, he addresses the reality of the prison he hates (despite its sometimes seductive embrace), describing the tattooed walls as if examining his own life's scars. And, in a way, he is.

I despise you for your lies,  
 For your truths,  
 I despise you for "Life"

For every secret  
 You've ever kept for my sake  
 Certainly you have never listened  
 Not to my goals  
 Nor to my needs  
 Not even to my jokes  
 All you have ever held  
 Is what keeps me in sickness  
 And I despise you for that, too

For every gust of wind  
 You have shielded me from  
 I think that maybe  
 The breeze came to rescue me  
 Maybe the rain  
 Which you kept from reaching my head  
 Fell to wash away my pain...

But you will never understand that  
 Not in your selfishness  
 Not in your fear  
 Of losing me forever.

*Before I get off this paper I want to give thanks and praise to all the HARD WORKIN employees there at The Beat.*

**BRON' SHI JACKSON**

Bron' Shi Jackson is writing to us from Folsom State Prison in Represa, CA. Saying goodbye is a hard thing to do whether to your freedom, or to your wife, or friend after a visit is over. But saying goodbye is also the start of a new beginning and a new life. Check out Bron Shi's piece.

**Goodbye**

Pure beautiful angel with the face of Mercury  
 You lift my side many moons ago and still it's hurtin' me  
 Raindrops, fall out the sky whenever I think of you  
 Fallin' stars, to many to catch so what was I to do?  
 I made a wish that never came true I wont do that again  
 My first mistake was thinking that you could make me a  
 better man.

Homesick, lost and alone that's what I've become  
 Alienated here on my own on the third rock from the  
 sun  
 Peaces of a broken heart that's what you left with me  
 I guess it wasn't enough when I gave you galaxies  
 Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars you wore as jewelry  
 And still you cried out for more  
 because you was using me  
 And still I can't blame you at all for the hand that I was  
 dealt

I'm locked up for stealing star that sat on Orion's belt  
 Now there will never be a I and you or a you and I  
 And the hardest thing I ever had to do was say  
 goodbye....Goodbye. Thanks and God bless.

**Beat Within**

Thanks for my latest issues of The Beat. I'm almost done with volume 13.10 and I just got'em yesterday. Shout out to Mikhail welcome back homie and to the young homie P.Crooks that "Youngin With a Dream Like King's" was deep. There's a lot more, but those were the two I was really feeling and can remember off the top of my head.

Before I get off this paper I want to give thanks and praise to all the HARD WORKIN employees there at The Beat. It's because of you all we can be heard. And to new Beat worker, Annie Wong- Good lookin' out on the volumes and the kind words. But to be real with you I don't think my ex will ever get to read that poem "in love". She moved on now and had a baby girl with her now boyfriend. I wish her the best and pray for her happiness. So with all that said I now give you part two to that poem, "In Love".

*It seems that we grew up so quick  
and I often miss the past  
Sometimes I have to let a tear drip down  
my dark shiny eyes  
Because for someone you really love,  
you are never too tough to cry  
And if I was in the same situation,  
I know you would cry for me*

*read the rest of Kadaris Cook's BWO piece on page 59*

