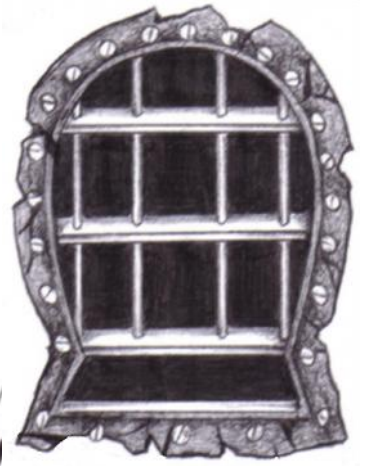
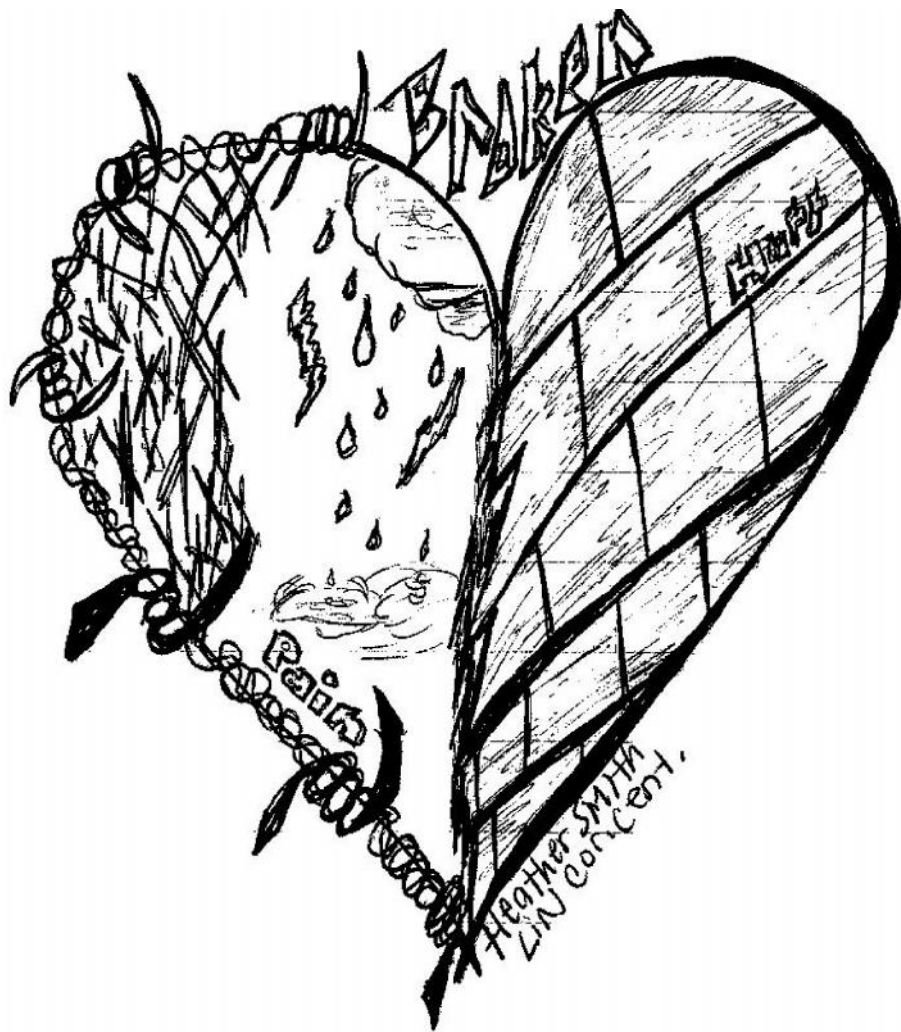

Making
CHOICES



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MAKING CHOICES

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Jail Ministry

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Making Choices

combines the voices of those who are incarcerated at Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, Cook County Jail and institutions throughout the state.

It is published as a means to give a voice to those who wish to speak out.

It is a project of Kolbe House, the Catholic Jail Ministry and Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation.



Dear Lord

by Ferdinand Johnson
CCJ - Div 5

Dear Lord it's not the same
when I am walking through this darkness.
If pain is a brush
I paint a picture like an artist,
That my life's hard
but I made it through harshness.
Life is not mine
but I treat it like I bought it.
My Pops was everything
until I turned around and lost him.
The heart still beats
but I feel exhausted.
My love is so strong
I hope the world don't insult it.
Am cursed with these demons
I pray to God that he save it.
I smoke a blunt a day
to keep my mind off some bull**
But now I'm back in time
I feel like I made a death wish.
Amen.

Poetry from within the Walls

A mother's betrayal

*By Brooke Johnson
Dwight C.C.*

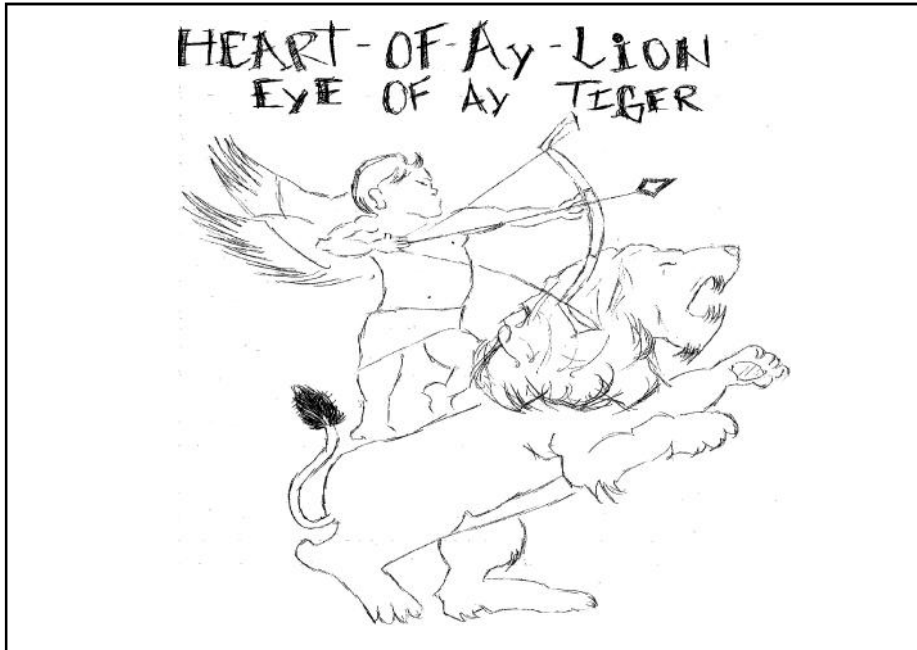
My mind races, at so many different
paces,
Wondering if I will see your face,
When I leave this dark and cold place.
I said I would never leave you,
But look what I have put you through,
Running in and out,
Leaving you with so much doubt.
The days are getting colder,
Knowing you are growing older.
One day it was mommy look at me,
The next it was mommy how could you
leave me.

I see you in my dreams,
In a million different ways it seems.
How can I have faith, when I'm filled
with so much hate?
The next time we meet,
I'm not sure how my heart will beat.
I can't wait for the day,
To say mommy is here to stay...

Just say no!

*By James Clarke
Mt. Sterling, IL*

If my days were untroubled and my
heart always light,
Would I seek that fair land where
there is no night?
If I never grew weary with the
weight of my load,
Would I search for peace at the end
of the road?
If I never knew sadness and never
felt pain,
Would I reach for a hand to help
and sustain,
If I walked not with sorrow and
lived without loss,
Would my soul seek sweet solace at
the foot of the cross?
I ask myself this and the answer is
plain,
If my life were all pleasure and I
never knew pain,
I'd seek drugs less often and need
them much less,
For drugs are sought more often in
times of distress,
And no one knows drugs or see's the
gain,
As those who have met death on the
pathway of pain.



Almost over

By Jennifer Newbauer
Lincoln C.C.

I just need to sit, let the thoughts flow,
So I could let ya all know now this is me.
I'm only gonna get better with time,
And while I sit and write this rhyme,
I'm thinkin about this crime.

Now it's almost over when I walk out these gates,
I need all the luck I could get cuz this world went to sh**,
These people need to stop and think about the good not the bad,
Cuz all that's gonna do is make yall mad.

I'ma have an attitude of gratitude,
I'm thankful for everything I got,
if it wasn't for my gram, I'd

be having holes in my sock.
She's been here for me this whole time,
All you other f***s ain't nuthin but a lie.

I know who I am I haven't felt this good about myself in a while,
And I know I'ma be walkin outta here with a big smile.
For all you lady's locked up I hope you find yourself, don't hide yourself.
It doesn't only make you a bigger mess it doesn't make no damn sense.

We should be tryin to stick together instead of tryin to, Rip each other apart where the hell is yall hearts!?
Well, now I get a fresh start with this really big heart,
I'ma be thinkin of all the good I'll do, shouldn't you?!

Don't underestimate the things I could do,

Cuz I'll make you look like a damn fool.
That's it; that's all,
Hope I find a four leaf clover cuz hell yeah; it's almost over.

He and I saw

By Cin'Quinn Roberson
Pinckneyville C.C.

God saw something special in you,
I was equally blessed when he showed me;
I would've given my all for you in that moment,
No matter what anyone told me,

The thought of love you forever bring my heart to full content,
So I pray for a special bond, a special love,

A special connection that could only be heaven sent,
Sometimes things in life get rough and don't go the way we've planned,
And the things we hold so close are now simply out of hand.

It is in those times that the weak will pray no longer,
When our friendship is based on God through our weakness he becomes stronger.

Can you hear me?

By Jennifer Hurd
Lincoln C.C.

I feel these brick walls
coming in,
I'm trying to focus but the
images are dim,
I feel confused, stressed,
and dismayed,
God says he will help me, if I
only prayed.

I pleaded, cried and begged
for his help,
While the devil struck me
down with a belt,
I don't understand, things
seem to get worse,
I believe my life is under a
curse.

It's cold in here and I can't
be myself,
My life has been paused and
put on a shelf,
The wicked continue to try
to tear me down,
But I refused to let them
push me around,
I need a release from these
chains,
I need a cure for these
pains.

Help me father, I know you
hear my cry,
Don't let the wicked rejoice
while I die.

Fool's Game

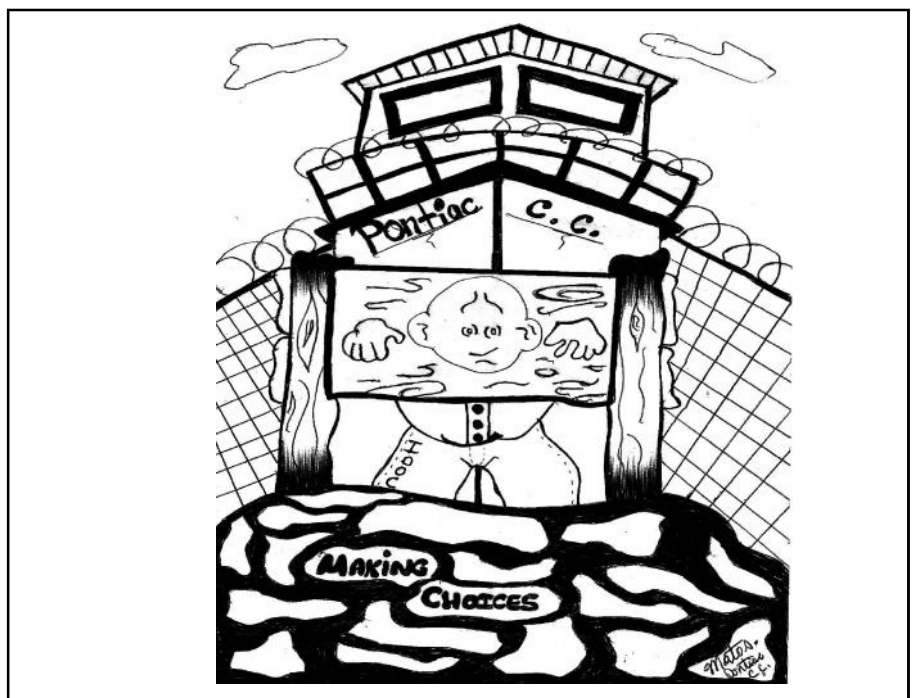
By Afton Ferris
Dwight C.C.

I can no longer cry over you,
You've caused me too much pain,
I finally see that I was the
bigger fool,
And you're pretty much insane,
I gave you all that I had,
Yet you wanted so much more,
I now see where it began to go
bad,
Wish I had spotted it before,
I'm now in a hellish dream,
And learning things I wish I'd
known,
We've pushed too hard at a
brittle seam,
Not quite sure what's about to
unfold,
You played me well in your
twisted game,
Fed me so many sweet lies,
We're never going to be the
same,
Hope you know I've said
goodbye.

Pushing

By Tonya Hill
Dwight C.C.

Pushing hard at the start,
Pushing hard day by day.
Pushing to the point of
dismay,
pushing hard just to say,
keep your head up,
never look down,
then you to can see what is
in fornt of you.





Grand city

By Richardo Marchan
CCDOC, Div. 9

Nobody wants to die but they
hope to go to heaven,
Death is not an option we
return to our essence,
Nothing worse cause it hurts
this here is our survival,
We find faith in the most
high, Qur'an or Bible,
In the midst of the dubious
battle one drop,
He's bleeding profusely,
paramedics can't help him,
Maybe prayer is needed.

Choking barely breathing his
life is slowly leaving,
Death without repentance all
he seen is demons,
all his life been scheming, of
course, he had his reason,
Went against the grain, on
the streets we call it treason,
Charge it to the game; blame
it on his fame,
How can I maintain? So sick
of the lifestyle, no one to
love,
No one to trust was numb to
the pain,
Live in the storm, walk in the

rain, went insane in the
brain,
Causalities of war,
sacrifices had to be made,
This is hell on earth not an
escapade,
My work here is done, read
between the lines, and listen
to the cascade.

Lord you found me

By Mary White
Dwight C.C.

Lord, you found me in the dark,
When evil blew my lights out,
You took my hand and walked
with me,
Since then I've had no doubt.
You found me in the depths,
When evil pushed me off the
pier,
You wrapper me in your peace,
Since then I've had no fear.
You saved me from sin,
When temptation sought my
heart,
You touched my cheek and
smiled at me,
I know we'll never part.

Life of poverty

By James Williams
CCDOC, Div. 9

Will I make it thru today to
see tomorrow?
Gun blazin, exploding
grenades, machete blades,
Will I make it thru this pain
and sorrow by tilt'n this
bottle?
Dilute the pain a little still
left feeling hollow,
My soul is overloaded with
burdens,
I'm almost for certain I'm
doomed,
This open wound won't heal up
like I'm destine for a tomb,
Scavengers surround me tryna
bound me,
Demons tryna take my soul
hope God find me,
Drowning in misery a thousand
feet deep,
Critically wounded mentally,
mind stuck in the streets,
I live the urban life in the
ghetto where it's hard to
sleep.

A part of me is lost and it's
obviously true,
Someone else feel the same as
I do,
Heart racing, hard to escape
these skeletons in the
basement,
This everyday life that I'm
faced wit,
Some may come, some leave
without traces,
I face it- every day and it
still bothers me,
This life that I live, a life
stuck in poverty.

On bended knee

By Duraine Carr
Big Muddy River C.C.

On bended knee I ask,
You to be more than just my
girl,
And grant my wish of you
making me the luckiest man in
the world,
Because being with you for
the rest of my life would be
honor and my pleasure,
With them you were treated
like trash but with me you'd
be treated like treasure,
My looking days are over
because you're all I've been
searching for,
I know because you're my
best friend and still all I
want is more,
So here I am pouring out my
heart not even too ashamed to
cry,
Your love gives me so much
strength and courage,
Sometimes I feel like I can
fly, I've fallen head over heels
for you,
And I don't know who to
blame I'm trying to give you
all of me,
Hoping one day you'd do the
same I don't want to steal
your heart my love,
I'd much rather prefer you
give because then I would
know that I've earned it,
And I'd cherish it for as long
as I live my love for you is
ride or die,
So I'm up for any task, I'd
give you the world, just give
me your heart,
On bended knee I ask.

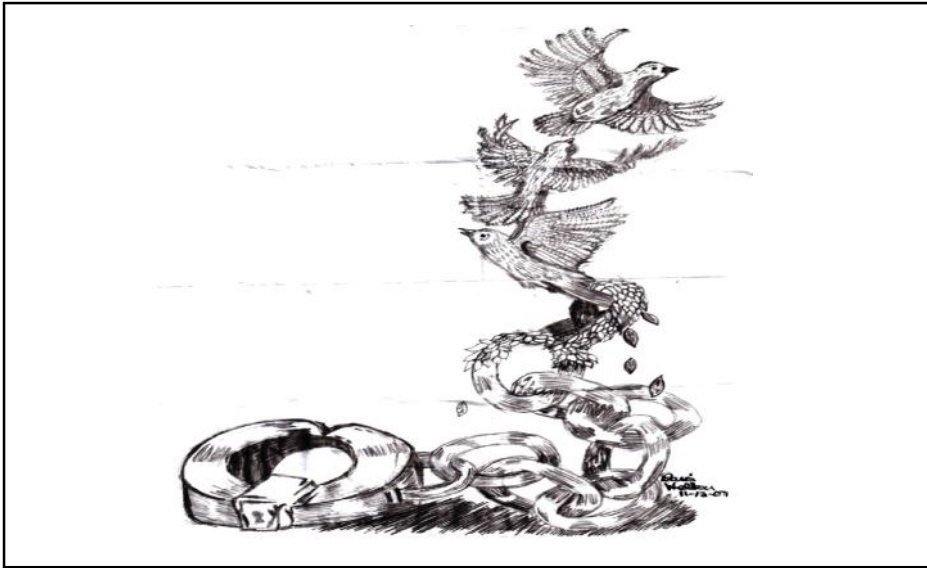
"PlayStation 60"

By Eric Long
C.C.I.

I wake up to 4 brick walls and
I can't get out,
4 bars on the window so I
can't get out,
Sometime I set back and think
that I ain't getting out,
Just want to bang a n**** to
let this frustration out,
I'm nice inside I need to let
this stranger out,
Sometimes I set in my cell
crying to let this pain get out,
I wish I had the strap I'll let
my brain hang out,
Joe I'm tired of 23's and 1's
lock in lock out,
These n****s crying about 23
months,
You caught with enough dope
for 400 trucks,
You should be happy I got 400
months,
I ain't gonna see the world
until they make PlayStation
60s,
They tryna keep a n****

locked down until I'm 60,
These c*****s got me feeling
like I was born in the 60's
They might as well pull the
whip out and just lynch me,
1803 Joe they was hanging
n****s,
It's 2012 and they still
hanging n****s,
They give you 60 years like
its gone change a n****,
180's and 360's aint goin tame
a n****,
These c*****s give you more
time than a clock can keep,
When I was on the streets I
was quick too cock the heat,
Joe, I done broke in people
houses and watches them sleep,
Ain't no boundaries on this
s*** when it comes to beef,
Joe, I'm trying to make you
feel some grief,
Like somebody in the joint
finding that they mom's
deceased,
But I ain't goin see the world
until they make "PlayStation
60".





Reflections

*By Rod Black
Harrisburg Jail*

Sometimes I realize I am all alone,
The loneliness cuts to the bone,
Every morning I wake up in jail,
Every evening I am waiting on mail,
Every day brings me closer to you,
Being without freedom is not cool,
My memories keep my spirit afloat,
Sometimes I wear my loneliness like a coat,
I walk around with a plastic smile,
I'll admit I missed my mark by a mile,
The days turn into months the months turn into years,
The disappointments turn into sadness the sadness turns into tears,
How do you remain positive when you live in captivity?
Someone smarter than me said, "This too shall pass"
This aint my first time being incarcerated, but I hope it's my last.

Real talk

*By Patrice Daniels
Pontiac C.C.*

Poppin bottles isn't all it's cracked up to be,
Poppin bottles isn't all it's cracked up to be.
Poor people killing other poor people,
What kinda sense does that make?
Wildin out isn't necessarily a good look either,
Who are you wildin out on?
Somebody who looks just like you and lives where you live-right?
You're continuing to destroy your own community and its habitants.
Does that make good sense?
Would you urinate and defecate on the bed you sleep on at home?
Well, that's basically what you do every time you perpetuate or perpetrate violence in your neighborhood.

Helpin make shorties you can't provide for isn't necessarily a good luck.

Young ladies- no good dude wants a loud, uneducated, trash talkin, insecure, promiscuous girl.

Young men- no good woman wants a gang bangin, whoreish, dope dealin, school skippin, irresponsible, impulsive, short sighted, crowd pleaser for her man.

We often attract the kinds of people that fit who we are as people.

Do you want to attract builders or destroyers?

Do you want to attract winners or losers?

Young people- you don't have to do what I did!

You still have hope,
Please take need,

Before it's too late.

You all are more than capable,

Get yall s*** together!

I love all of yall!

Real talk.

The shadows of life

*By Leslie Matos
Pontiac C.C.*

Sometimes in life we have to minimize our self's to our peers,
To obtain an image in life we want to conceal,
It is said people condemn what they don't understand,
But at times to not be understood is to keep others unbalanced,
They say the devils biggest trick was to make people believe he didn't exist.
No one is a master his own mind, 'it takes to be in touch with yourself to be able to overcome obstacles.
For they are what allows you to realize your potential, strength, and power!
To all in this prison life struggle I say to you all!
Making Choices can and will test the limits of your soul!
Never judge a book by it's cover.
Remember what may seem fun now can later leave you with 1 year across the board,
And a 6 year case, may the choices we all make be blessed!

The Bar

*By Phillip Binder
Pinckneyville C.C.*

The name of each saloon is a bar,
The fittest of it names by far,
A bar to heaven, a door to hell,
Whoever named it, named it well.
A bar to manliness and wealth,
A door to want and broken health,
A bar to honor, pride and fame,
A door to grief and sin and shame.
A bar to hope, a bar to prayer,
A door to darkness and despair.
A bar to honored useful life,
A door to brawling, senseless strife,
A bar to all that's true and brave,
A door to every drunkard's grave.
A bar to joys that home imparts,
A door to tears and aching to hell,
Whoever named it, named it well.

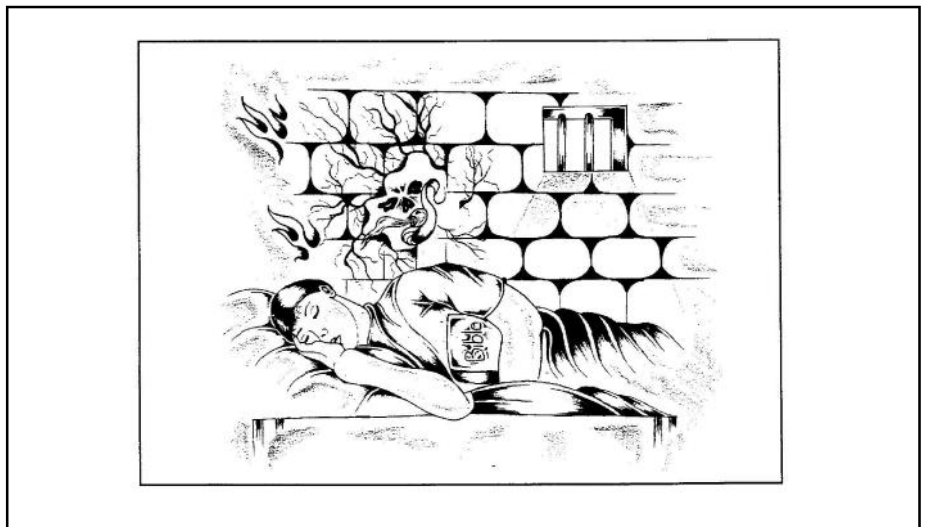
When we look away

*By Alberto Reyes
Sheridan C.C.*

Killing was just a game,
dealing drugs was just the same.
Woman had no shame, selling their bodies for a hit or crack cocaine.

All you see at night are hypes, taking away our children, with futures so bright,
We are telling them its ok, by looking the other way, if we keep looking away it's going to be our child being lowered into the grave.

I pray that it's not going to end up that way,
But tell that to the parents who buried there child today.



"Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend."

By Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A letter to Heather

*By Ty Walker
Menard Seg.*

Your inmate embraces from a distant place,
And gentle words that were heard, one cannot
replace.
Helping to melt frozen demises,
Those endless sunrises dealt, were infinitely
felt.
So, dry those drops, from mournful memories
past,
That last, until the heart stops.
Cuz, the days still blaze, with silent tunes,
Deeper than the souls of ocean waves and the
night that lays behind the moon.
Like this melody burning bright, through the
words we write,
You aren't alone away from home, or in the
civil war you fight,
So now when you close your eyes and
contemplate, our fate,
We've grown to hate, I hope this reply to you
eases your innerstate.

Who's the most powerful person?

*By Latrice Brown
Dwight C.C.*

Who is the most powerful person? I may ask.
You might say a leader over a country,
a judge or someone in a leadership position.
In my book the most powerful person is...
The one who spoke into the darkness and
created the light,
The one who put the stars in the sky in the
void of the night.
The one who created man from the dust of the
earth.
The one who has the power to exalt one and
put one down,
The one who divided the land from the ocean,
the sea etc.
The one who holds up the sun, the moon, the
stars,
and the universe as a whole in its rightful
place.

The one that can have his enemies turn against
one another.
The one who has the power to turn one's heart
and mind anyway he chooses.
The one who has all power over Satan and his
host of demons,
The one who can give a life or take a life,
The one who knows the mind and heart of all
men.
The one who died on the cross for the sins of
the world and rose again on the 3rd day.
Who I described is the almighty, all-powerful,
all- knowing, and all- seeing God.

Why do you think you better than me?

*By Mandi Cunningham
Lincoln C.C.*

What makes you think you are better than me? Is it the D.O.C. uniforms you see?
Is that what makes you better than me?
Aren't we all children of God?
Cause these walls aren't the only thing that keeps us apart.
Is that what makes you better than me, cause we all make mistakes,
But one wrong turn is all it takes, that still doesn't make you better than me.
Is it the crime I committed, or is it the time I submitted?
That makes you think you are better than me?
How can you think that you can judge me?
When you don't even know the person you see?
Is that what makes you think you are better than me?

Is it because I am not free, that makes you think you are better than me?
Is it because you go home every night? Or is it because I see a flash light?
Is that what makes you think you better than me? Is it because the crimes I do?
That makes you think I'm lesser than you? But when it's all over I bleed just like you do!
And soon time will come to an end, but that still doesn't make you better than me.

Doesn't our God forgive us all? And it doesn't make a difference that I behind this wall.
Or is it because I have an X on my back that makes you think you know me like that?
And that still don't make you better than me.
Why can't we all just get along? Cause if we do the right thing we all can't go wrong.
So just open up your eyes and really see, that nothing in this life makes you better than me.

You're getting better

*By Frederick Barker
Joliet, IL*

Some people say, "It's nice what I write", to them a source of light,
Da plight of my life is a vision, given as a parable,
Oh so credible, edible, and delectable,
Written with the trigger finger, only speaks of ink linger,
My whole demeanor present, not like fema neglecting Katrina,
Servin harder than Serena, welcome to my arena,
When I felt a little spark, feelin I could embark,
On doin sumthin with da pen, men in da pen were my audience,
They never sugar coated, or had my head bloated,
Ferocious and potent, words spoken at a degree outside of chemistry,
Kinetically I write with no beat,
Produce heat as da pen moves across this sheet of paper,
Just a fraction of friction and I've constructed my diction,
Never to fall on deaf ears, da masses they will listen,
I can see a constellation of myself in da sky,
From livin life as a rabbi and facin adversity,
It's only in me to breakdown life's complexities,
And simultaneously build someone's dexterity.

A Note from Fr. Kelly...

I just got back last night from L.A. California. No, it wasn't a vacation, although the weather was pretty incredible.

I went there to visit a couple of places that reach out and help those who have been locked up. You may have heard of Homeboys Industires; it is a big place with many young people getting a lot of help. They have job training, Homegirl cafe, t-shirt company, etc. The only ones they will hire for Homeboy Industries are those who are on probation or parole. If you are not on probation or parole, they will help you and offer you all kinds of services - including helping you get a job - but you can't work right there. I am

sure there are a lot of reasons, but one is because no one else concentrates on those who are coming out of prison.

The other place I visited was Delancey Street - a residential place for guys coming out of prison or jail. It deals with adults who want to make a change in their life. They have to be serious and want to confront their "gang/street image" and discover who they truly are.

I went there to see how we might better serve those who are locked up and those who are coming out of the institutions.

Keep us in your prayers as you are in ours.

Peace,

Fr. Kelly

Write us your ideas:

If you want write an article for **MAKING CHOICES** we'd love to hear from you.

We want to hear what *you* have to say. This is your chance to say what you want. Let's talk about what it's like to be in the Audy Home, CCJ or in the Illinois State Correctional facilities. Also, if you go home, let us know. We want to hear about what is going on at home after being released.

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Kolbe House
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Be sure to include your name and section/institution— if you don't want your name printed just say so.

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