

My Voice Counts



MY VOICE COUNTS

Awakening a Silenced Voice



Edited by
Elijah Levy, Ph.D.

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Library of Congress Control Number:	pending
ISBN:	Softcover 978-1-6698-3944-6
	eBook 978-1-6698-3945-3

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Print information available on the last page.

Rev. date: 07/26/2022

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Acknowledgments By Elijah Levy, Ph.D.

A couple of years ago, the residents at Founders House of Hope and I agreed it was time to publish a second anthology of poetry. We published our first anthology in 2014 and it was time to revive our collective, vibrant and creative voice. Most of the poets in this book are a new group of residents who did not contribute to the 2014 book. This project demanded two years of a sustained effort to produce a meaningful, insightful and beautiful collection of poetry. The poems contain imagery, symbolism and narrative accounts of life as experienced by loving souls living with severe, persistent mental health conditions. Figurative language adds to the emotional appeal and gratifying mood the reader will experience. The themes include love, life interrupted by mental illness, family, friendships and how God inspires hope, optimism and strength to pursue recovery and meaningful living. I am eternally grateful the residents wrote and experienced how therapeutic and liberating the writing process could be. The process engendered self-discovery and illuminated once dark passages to bright landscapes of fertile soil.

I have been at Founders House of Hope for 25 years, and it has been my eternal true work. I must express my deep appreciation to the Bolong family who founded Trucare Community for their enduring support of my work at Founders. I am empowered to implement our recovery program so the residents can achieve their rehabilitation goals. I have the resources to support each resident's path to reclaim their lives, imbue their life with meaning and pursue self-determination. We have attained impressive program accomplishments at Founders House of Hope and will continue to inspire residents to achieve worthwhile goals. All the employees at Founders, from our administrative leadership, housekeeping and dietary department care deeply for the residents and are invested in their well-being and recovery.

Undoubtedly someone needed to type the manuscript which was handwritten by the residents. Debi Klement dedicated countless hours typing everyone's poetry to create the manuscript. We are so grateful to have Debi support this project and she understands how the publication of this anthology champions the march toward recovery for our residents. Thank you so much Debi for the ongoing care you express for our residents.

MARY NYAKIO

I joined kindergarten in 1986. I didn't know how to tackle life as a beginner. Everybody looked strange with new faces. My first class was math. Having teacher on the board seems hard. I was familiar with writing since my mom wrote some information to us before we go shopping. My sister was in a different class since we are identical twins, so we joined school together. The teachers were fair, and they could let us go for P.E. everybody was friendly and seemed happy being in school for the first time. I met my boyfriend the first day I joined school, so I welcome him in my life. We sit together so I did have hard way to communicate with him. The teacher let us share our dream and we shared the story we like. We were excited that everyone had something to tell. It was our home being in school for the first time. No one quit because all the teachers in kindergarten were kind. I stay in kindergarten for two years and I joined primary school years later. Life has been great, and I enjoyed my life being in kindergarten.

I dedicate my poetry to my family and to Founders House of Hope

MY ARC OF LIFE

I may be in dark surrounding, but my cup is full of light shining endlessly.
My heart sustains comfort guidance and protection to cover it all.
I don't look backward always.

I can see beyond MY LIMIT.
Nothing hinders me from MOVING FORWARD.
So, surrender all.



TOUCH POINTS ON MY LANDSCAPE

Do not give up, embrace that you are defeated.
The chance to succeed is not gone.

We keep on trying because that's the only
way to pursue our goal.

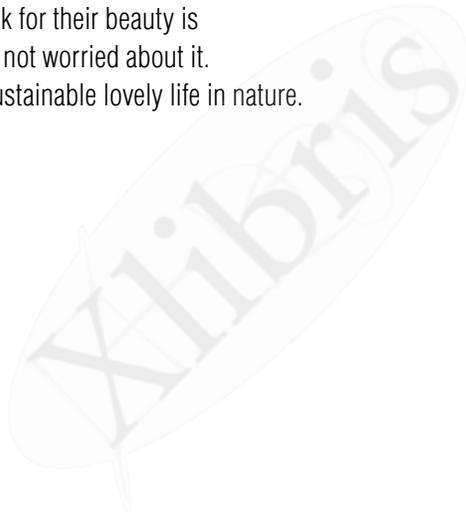
I believe in a firm foundation.
The direction to a clear path.

The truth in our heart is a guarantee
that we are worth it.
The reality is that we can do it.

We have the potential to do it,
so the strength is within us, no doubt.

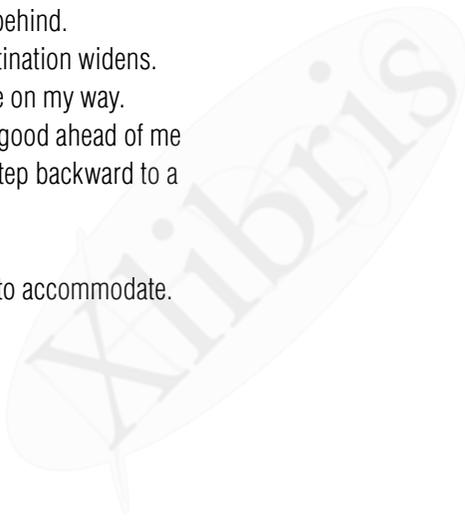
I AM CURIOUS ABOUT NATURE.

The skies are blue.
The flowers bloom and are fragrant.
They hinder no beauty on them.
I am not afraid to feel the better
things they provide.
The duration to look for their beauty is
unlimited and I am not worried about it.
I believe there is sustainable lovely life in nature.
So, bear with it.



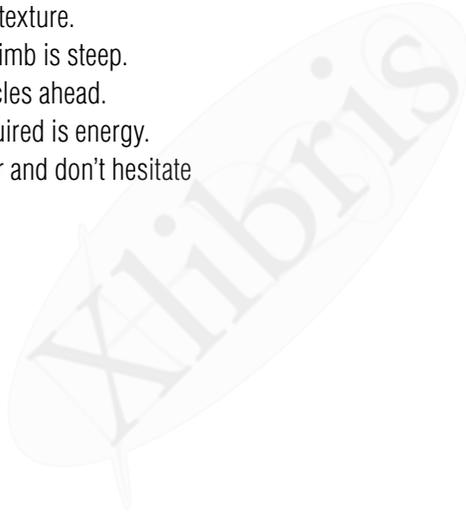
I BELIEVE IN DESTINY

No wonder we are active.
If not so, heaven could fall and
swallow us.
We walk through a narrow path.
This leads us to a destination.
I leave my sorrow behind.
My path to my destination widens.
To see the outcome on my way.
I target everything good ahead of me
so I don't have to step backward to a
point of no regret.
The light is bright.
There is too much to accommodate.



MY CHOREOGRAPHED LIFE

There is no emptiness anymore.
The capacity to conquer is still alive.
No hindrance to Joy.
The focused is no end.
The air is still fresh.
The earth is full of texture.
The mountain to climb is steep.
But I see no obstacles ahead.
The only thing required is energy.
Let us feel stronger and don't hesitate
to fall backward.



THE STILL OF THE MOMENT

Nothing can hold my life.
It's like a gravitational pull.
A degree of occupancy.
It's tied up with visions.
That's why I am not afraid.
It seems no regret.
Achievement is on the way.
I count everything with no measure.
There is no division to life.
Do not be defeated.
Be an advocate for yourself.
Learn to forgive and forget.
That's the only way you can justify yourself.
Have fun.
And keep the truth to yourself.

PARTING

I prepare myself, but it is sorrowful.

Many things are left behind.

There is nothing you can do, but let it go.

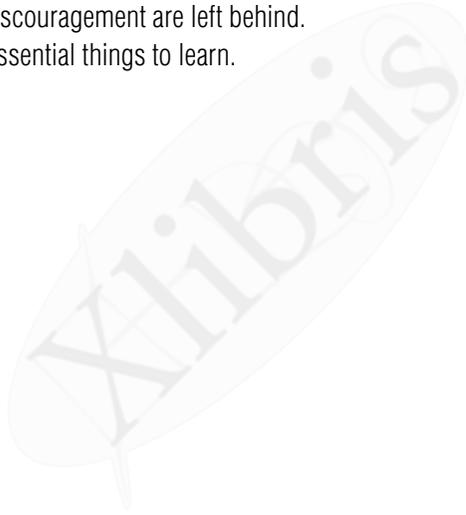
It is hard to understand, but better things ahead.

Every move is that good things may happen.

Desperation and discouragement are left behind.

There are always essential things to learn.

Don't give up.



MY LUGGAGE

It's heavy but I carry it with care.

Many things to put in it.

I wonder how I will take it with me
because it is full.

No one to help me but I will keep pressing.

I am not in a hurry, so my luggage is
easier to carry.

I make sure I am comfortable with my luggage.

It doesn't matter which way I go my luggage is easier.

I open my luggage whenever I want.

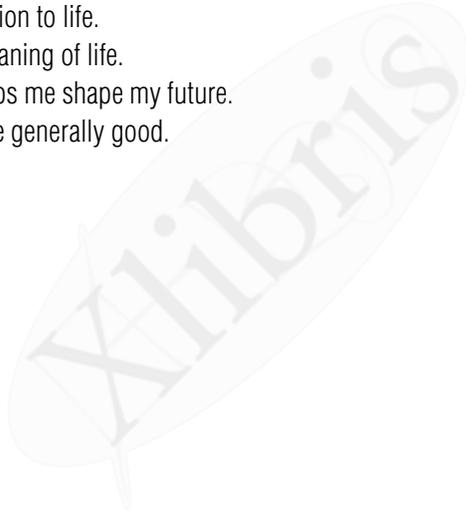
I pack it with everything I need.

I make sure that everything is in order.

My luggage is smooth to move.

ALIVE AND GRATEFUL

I can find happiness in every memory.
I can create my own positive energy.
When people get to know me, they like me.
I can see the picture of me big.
I take small steps every day.
I dedicate my passion to life.
I determine the meaning of life.
Every decision helps me shape my future.
I believe people are generally good.



MY LIFE LINE

No worry about things I can't control.

I am positive role model to others.

I will try something different today.

I am not afraid to step outside of my comfort zone.

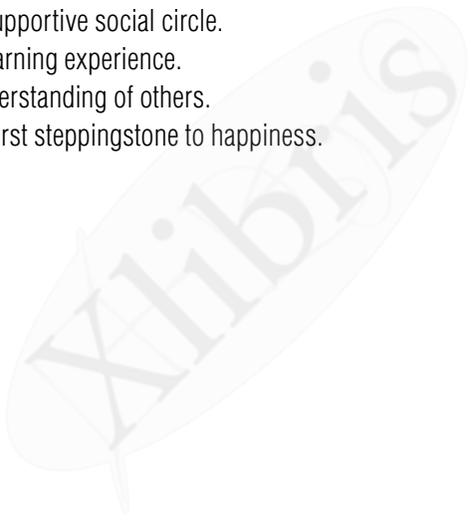
There is forgiveness to people who hurt me in the past.

I have a rich and supportive social circle.

My past is a big learning experience.

Try to be more understanding of others.

My depression is first steppingstone to happiness.



A SIGNIFICANT DOWNLOAD TO MY LIFE

A firm foundation.

A little moment of despair.

A steppingstone to our lives.

There is connection through generation.

We believe in our desires.

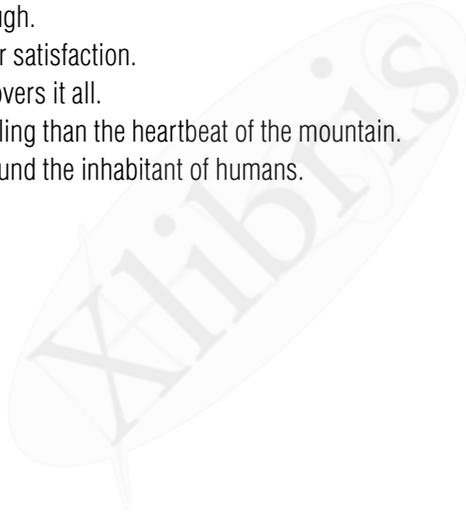
Life is mature enough.

Any outcome is our satisfaction.

Meaningful love covers it all.

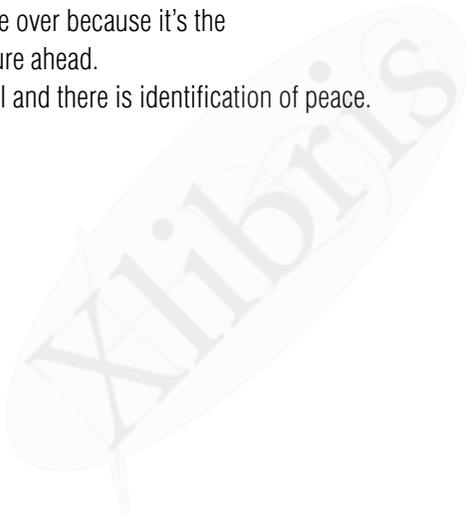
Nothing more fulfilling than the heartbeat of the mountain.

The earth is all around the inhabitant of humans.



DANCING WITH LIFE

Down in the valley lies a heavy shadow.
It's hard to see through but there is
accessibility to a dark situation.
There is a narrow path leading to perfection.
I cannot tell it all, but I can feel the texture.
I let confidence take over because it's the
only way to the future ahead.
The situation is real and there is identification of peace.



MY EXQUISITE MIND

All mankind, animal and beings are equal
in the brink of mankind's history.

This is more to us.

We move with nature.

I believe in silence.

We greet each other to portray the warmth
of our heart.

Widening our horizon is an expectation of
new hopes and dreams.

Let's focus on truth rather than hate in our
heart because that is the only way to respect
each other.

Don't be surprised by good doctrine, focus
on your memory that leads to possibility in life.

SOMEONE FROM YOUR PAST ENTERS YOUR LIFE — WHO IS IT AND WHAT DO THEY GIVE YOU?

My brother who invited me to the United States.
He directed me and gave me a hint of American
history and its culture.

He ensured that I enrolled in school, paid some bills,
bought me a car and introduced me to his friends.

He took me to Big Bear and shared his most
favorite American food which are hamburgers and Diet Dr. Pepper.

He bought me some novels to read and cooking books.

IF YOU CAN BE A FAMOUS PERSON IN HISTORY, WHO WOULD YOU BE AND WHY?

My Mom, she is famous because she brought me into life.

Born in 1955 in a family of seven kids she communicated very well with her family especially her mom.

She joined school for most of her year.

She worked years.

She worked hard for my family and she could see everybody do well.

She loved birds.

Her leisure time she could do knitting sweaters and give them to the neighbors.

I admire her for giving birth to twins, two girls and two brothers.

She is a role model to me for exciting smile on her face always.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE YEAR?

In the year 2001 I joined computer college.
Pursued my certificate in nine computer packages.
My friend gave me some gifts.
We celebrated my high school graduation.
It was hard to believe that they could stay with
me for a long time.
We went hiking and visited the beach.
My friends like swimming so we had a
chance to swim.
We took some pictures.
Everybody was happy and we enjoyed being together.
The same year we had a family get together.
I was glad to see all my uncles, aunties, sister,
brothers, mom, cousin nephew and nieces.
I cherish this moment because my Mom does too.

IF YOU COULD LOOK INTO THE FUTURE, WOULD YOU SMILE

I could smile because all around me is
Marvelous.

You make mistakes but there are chances for recovery.

No matter how hard it is, there is a new
beginning.

Regrets are just a matter of time that we
see a new world with a new invention.

This is a good view to me.

There is one thing to be proud of,
the diversity of life, it hinders nothing out of it.

I can't turn my face backward because I am
affected by the future,
there are many things to conquer.

AS A KID, I PRAYED

It all started with my grandmother who
who taught us how to pray.

Every time we had a meal, before we sleep
my grandmother asks everybody to pray.

Praying had a good impact in my life because
once I go to church, the pastor requested us to
pray so I did find it hard to do.

Knowing how to pray opened doors in my life.

When I was sick I prayed and I could recover.

Prayer elevated my heart with joy praying for
other people and church helped me to know
that only God could handle everything which
seems hard.

Prayer made me look at the world properly.

While I prayed I realized that God could
restore everything.

WHAT WAS THE BEST DAY OF YOUR LIFE?

My first birthday was supernatural to me.
I was 6 years old.

My mom gave me a huge gift and my sister and brothers bought me a toy.

Everybody hugged which was a good thing to do.

It was good knowing my new friends who visited us during my birthday.

I was glad that everybody was present.

Nice to know I was one in a million a chosen person to celebrate a first birthday.

What a wonderful and sweet time I had.

A moment of uniqueness.

The truth is that I know the relevance of who I am in this life.

WHAT IS MY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE?

Being in good mood.
Satisfaction of all my memory.

The defense of my heart purity.

A person who enjoys what nature gives.

Best outcome of all my endeavors.

When miracle of unusual circumstances
happen, I am ready for it.

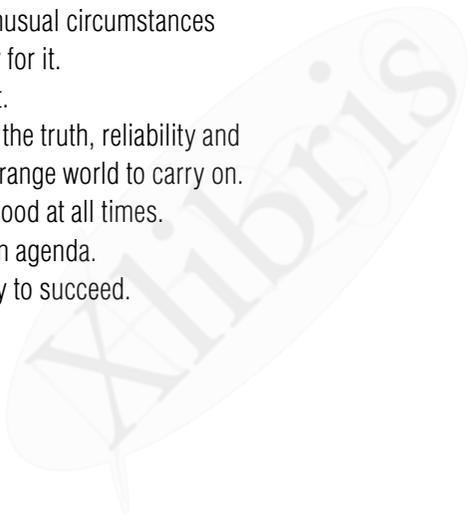
A point of no regret.

Justice of knowing the truth, reliability and
capability of this strange world to carry on.

Try my best to be good at all times.

Discover the hidden agenda.

Being set and ready to succeed.



WHAT HEROIC ATTRIBUTES DO I HAVE?

To look life in all dimension as memorable.
To understand that the earth perishes but all
generates again and become mature.
A good privilege of not misusing my time.
A courage to undergo all where humans face.
A desire to maintain my virtue and value,
a reason not to undermine human potential.
Ability.
Recognizing an importance of culture of
different people.
Leading a good way and not working backward.
To maintain dignity and not feel pressured.

A PROSPEROUS LIFE FOR ME MEANS

Having no overwhelming things to tackle.
Good morals and reflecting on good desire.

To be nurtured and being loved.

Not assuming that life has no downfall.

Remaining confident at all times.

Learning from unapproved life.

Focusing from all aspects.

Not forgetting to rely on my strengths.

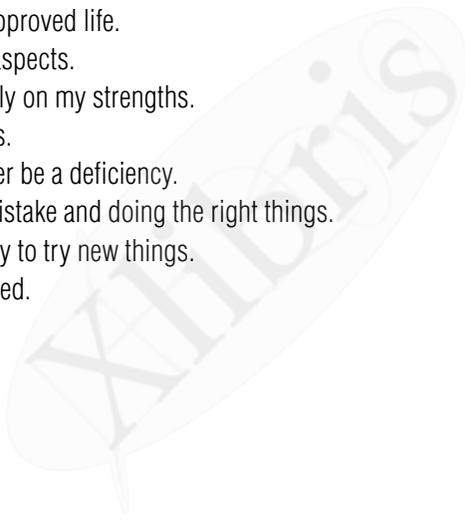
Put away old myths.

Not letting the anger be a deficiency.

Categorizing my mistake and doing the right things.

More of being ready to try new things.

Not being abandoned.



IF I HAD A CHANCE

If I had a chance, I will submit my doubt
to the world around me.

I will relieve my burden.

I will carry on duties that are heavy.

Deliver messages that can revive the unknown.

I will look for a chance to create.

Look for privileges that have been stolen.

Let the world of division not rule.

Create a free surrounding around me.

Save humans in danger and show them how
possibilities in life are endless.

MY LIFE IS NOT PREDESTINED

I will absorb my overturned life.

By ensuring I am not overwhelmed by negative issues.

I will fight to my strength.

I will acquire many gifts to mark my endurance.

Set my eagerness towards the remaining time.

Not be endangered by the polluted circumstances.

Count my joy as outward acknowledgment of my discovery.

Hope for an unfinished race with glory.

I will combine my bitterness with success.

My soul gets satisfied by everything around us let laugh sustain my endeavor.

THE TRAIL OF MY LIFE

Withholding my breath deeply.
I am not going to let any disappointment enter.
Not being around tiredness.
Being less concerned of forgettable life.
My focus not letting downfall capture me.
Let the sky be my limit.
Adapt techniques that are bearable.
Targeting the achievable.
Move to one direction of unlimitless.
Obtain a fresh mind for any obstacles.
Have a sense of being capable.
Keeping the momentum.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY BEING HUMAN?

Functioning properly by being connected to mind,
body and soul.

Letting no old attribute lie over you.

Being able to predict the unknown.

Search for a better you.

Not being dehumanized .

Reach your capability.

Revenge the bad of you to a better you.

Admire the beauty of the environment around you.

Do not demand for hard things.

Releasing your heart to rewarding values.

Maintaining the chances of good things you
achieved in life.

Self-efficiency of who you are.

HOW HAS FOUNDERS HELPED YOU?

To balance my life.
Make choices that make me whole again.
Carry myself with self-confidence.
It has made me handle my impossibility.

Obtain moderate values.
I can relate to different environment, especially
seeing different types of people.

Look forward to face challenges that are difficult
to handle.
I have a sense of maturity.

To hold my ground.

Guiding myself to a perfect direction.
I have not been attacked by catastrophe in life.

The idea of acquiring more power to retain
satisfaction defining complicated situation
of my life.

WHAT WAS THE MOST FRIGHTENING SITUATION?

Reaching my most wanted task like accommodating
much in my whole life.

Sometimes feeling totally scared.

Lack of motivation to endure challenges.

Letting precious moments go by unfulfilled.

Unwanted despair that triggers humanity to needlessness.

Secret of how earth and life will end.

Lack of security and inability to identify courage.

HOW HAS HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION AFFECTED MY LIFE?

Alternative to look at new things does not come easy.
Every day is new, so no matter what,
you have to press on.
Time may look different as life changes with in
no time.

Perseverance is the only way to retain.
Seeing life in a new dimension is the key despite who you are.

Discipline is the key despite who you are.
Discipline is the only way to view a difficult situation.

The common goal is to cooperate with society
of which you have to make a decision.

Lack of evidence to prove things.

Life is in moderation.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION?

Breakdown and understandable misfortune.
Life has been frightened but the truth is
avoidance of circumstance is unfulfilled.

Time is always on your side, so watch out.
Been undermined.

One way to estimate who you are is to feel liberated.

Victory always comes by if you only wish for it.

Operate in a clear environmental surrounding.

Conquer if you only believe.

Trying new things is a daily life satisfaction.

WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE TO LIVE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION?

There is heavy burden of circumstances living with a mental condition.
Privileges are not easy to come by.

Acquiring too much is like not knowing a lot, because
no more old friends,
sometimes you cry to comfort yourself.

You rely on you own strength to defend yourself.

You cannot acquire all what you need by yourself.

You feel that some wishes are neglected.

You always sense that things are not accomplished.
You feel devoted to handle life to your best.

I would like people treat me with respect.
I would like a happy and a wonderful life with people around.

I like to live in a good direction not to lose my way.

There is a way to visualize things because the only
person who you can trust is yourself.

We do recover no matter what situation is.

TO BE ME MEANS I AM CAPABLE

To be me means not giving up.
Getting advice from other people.
Having a desire to cope with different situations.

I should not doubt when I am about to give up.
To try even if I am not sure.

Handling difficult situations at all times.

Moving to a higher point.
Encouraging myself in time of need.
Love other people.

Self-sufficient all areas of my life.
To be a good listener.

Being free always.

I pray and read the Bible, not living in isolation.

WHAT HAVE I DONE THAT HAS SERVED THE GREATER GOOD?

Praying for people that they can be victorious.
Not being demanding from my friends.

Asking questions.

Talking to my friends.

Going to church.

Helping people by taking their temperature every morning.

Taking my roommate to lunch.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I WANTED TO BE

A doctor.
A nurse.
An astronaut.

To live a life of comfort.

To persevere through hardship.

To take precaution of my own unknown world.

To set a common goal by being free.

To learn new things and challenge myself.

To have a flower garden.

To play soccer.

THE IRONY OF MY LIFE

Every failure can be a learning experience.
I am always changing.

I am learning new things every day.

I am genuinely interested in other people.

I have many strengths and positive characteristics.

I see anxiety as motivation to change and improve.

Listening to my emotion can help guide me to make better decisions.

I am dedicated to gradual self-improvement.

I know when to relax and take life seriously.

HOW I AM USING MY FRACTION OF A NANO SECOND ON EARTH

Committing myself to unmolded.
Sacrifice without giving up.
Reversing the old to the new.

Let my heart not hate.
Get tied up with new characteristics.

Build up a chance of trying.
Valuing new things that comes my way.
Not to be deteriorated even in time of hardship.
Acquiring without demanding.

Not letting strange things come to my side.

I AM PART OF THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

I live in the present moment.

I'm not afraid to step outside of my comfort zone.

I remain focused on what matters most in my life and relationships.

Most of my limitations in my life are fictions.

I exude purpose and joy.

I know when to trust my intuition.

I am optimistic about the future.

I can only give happiness to others once I have found happiness in myself.

I will make the most of this situation.

I don't always choose my circumstance, but

I choose how to respond to those circumstances.

THIS IS WHAT MY SHADOW REVEALS ABOUT ME

The direction I am moving and following is
unforgettable.

Being accountable to my own success.

Reference my past.

There is a way where there is no way.

Determination is the only way towards a common goal.

Failure is not forever.

There is downfall, but we figure it out.

There is supernatural relationship.

No limitation to life.

More expectation.

Beautiful surrounding.

DID YOU HAVE A YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY?

In the year 2012 I was homeless.

It was strange to me because I did know what to do.
I could think that I am no more functional.

I started drinking and smoking.

I happened to have friends who could join me every
morning until noon.

The only thing I could do is to associate by
drinking with them.

The only thing which was also depressing is to see
them go home and the only person we could live
together is my boyfriend who was still a drunkard man.

I did not like the whole situation, but I persevered.
Life seemed unhelpful but I knew there was a way
outside this world.

MAKING THE HEART UNDERSTAND WHAT THE MIND KNOWS

To carry enthusiasm.
To have an aspiration.

Remarkable and joyous moment.

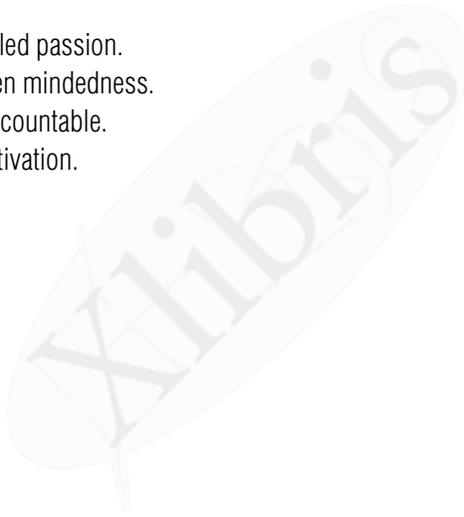
A higher spirit.

Conviction of detailed passion.

Happiness and open mindedness.

Energy which is uncountable.

Relaxation and motivation.



SHARING THE INNER LIGHT

A sense of illumination.
A shield and a buckle.

Deeper feelings.

Sense of humor.

Prestigious life.

Accessibility to perfect mindfulness.
Not being overwhelmed.

Well nurtured.

Courage and dedication.

Satisfaction and humility.

A clear path.

Admiration and friendship.

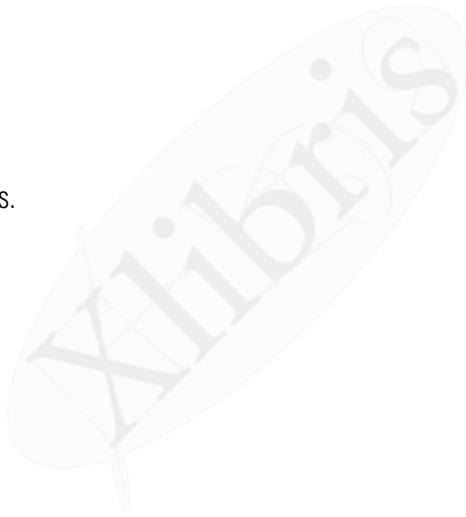
Socialization.

The anchor of love.

Believe and smiling.

HOW ARE YOU LEADING A LIFE OF IMPORTANCE?

Communicate with friends.
Saving money.
Praying.
Walking.
Eating healthy.
Reading.
Socializing.
Loving others.
Being happy always.



A MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

Masquerading through life.
Dance mask.

Pretending to be something you are not.

Something for change.

Soul shine.



ONCE

A distinguished moment in every situation.
Adequate desire but not punishable.

Alternative memory to be established.

Desire to adjust to hard things.

Good and diligent love.
A dissolved heart to love.

To be likeable forever.

Prestigious and familiarity.

Being able to cultivate the deeper me.

To navigate the distance priority.

Allow love to flow.

Keep away from danger.

Elevate my oppression in every circumstance.

HAVING A CHOSEN PATH.

Dedication with no obligation.
A pattern of no circumstance.

Formation of resilience.
Strength to rely on.

Decision to conquer.
Visionary outcome beyond understanding.

Self-denial for others around you.
Capacity of full potential.

High expectation accordingly.
More of chosen and capability to move on.
A duty of one's own length of caring.
More of fidelity.

SOUL SHINE

Direct you to open door and brighten oneself.
Up lift your knowledge beyond understanding.

Bring about comfort.

Enhance respect and good manners.

Strengthen your mind.

Enlightening one to reality.

Enhance morality and dignity it leads to endurance.

Leads to sense of motivation.

There is victory and now life.

A new reflection.

Absorbing new ideas.

MY ARC OF IMAGINATION

My arc's trajectory.
A wide, smooth dimension.
Leaving various ways to cope with life
like catering or nursing.

To measure my degree of working with
different kinds of people.

Engaging in computer college.

Developing motivation by cultivating friendship.
Visiting beaches.
Fishing with my family.
Learning from my mom.

Rehearsing my hobbies like soccer, volleyball.

MY HOPE WAS RESTORED WHEN

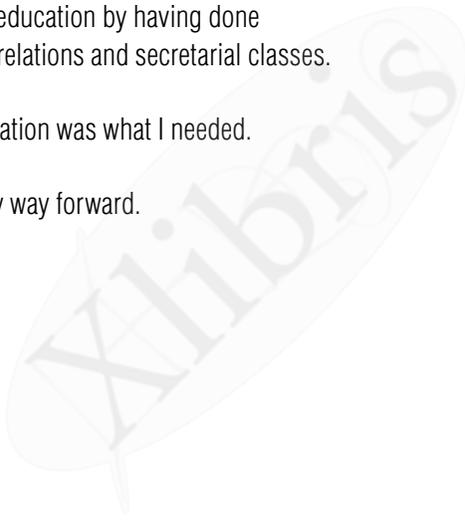
My hope was restored when I decided to choose a career for my life.

A dream about when life started when I attended college.

To achieve a good education by having done computers, public relations and secretarial classes.

Strength and dedication was what I needed.

A mile was the only way forward.



I'M ON THIS ROAD

It's narrow but easier to accommodate.
Because I turned to homelessness.

Having lost my job I did have a choice.
I had quite some things to not let me hold
onto the situation for a long time.
Suffering was what could make me think
that the real thing is out there.

It's just a matter of time to see people hanging with you.

Regret was not a way out.

Many were the days I could pray so that I could
have a breakthrough.

I started reading novels and some books which
was a way to keep me busy.

I go to church and listen to the word of God.

Love and kindness was from the church so it
made me keep going.

IT CAN TAKE MORE THAN A LIFETIME TO GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

I am forty years old.

There is more to learn.

It's just a matter of knowing how much to absorb to believe in something new every day.

It is a good habit I learned some circumstances are just a matter of time.

Being sure of what is worth to maintain the good things in you is the only way to many ideas.

Mistake doesn't make me stuck but, to get guidance and being assured that a lot can happen when you grow up.

ON MY MAP THESE ARE MY POINTS OF INTEREST

The points of interest on my map are
to have self-determination.

Getting up and down in this very moment.

To be satisfied in everything I do.

To number my activities and jobs I have held.

To celebrate my birthday.

To elaborate on my life further.

To create new ideas.

Go beyond my limitations.

To have a moment of my own concerned with
executing my livelihood.

To cope with hard situations when possible.

Leaving doubt behind as long as life endures.

Days that I am away, I am happy and I cherish them.

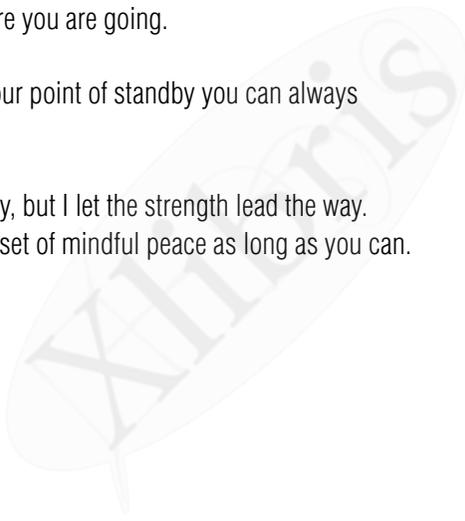
MY LADDER TO THE SKY

It takes me a step to know the higher it is.
Very steep but I push myself to reach as it is rough.
The higher it is, the more momentum I can have.
You got to hold it tight otherwise you fall and die.

It takes you to where you are going.

If you are not on your point of standby you can always
wait to find out.

You can grow weary, but I let the strength lead the way.
You can deposit asset of mindful peace as long as you can.



TASTING THE RAINBOW IS LIKE

New habit.
Changing the direction where there is none to reach.

Most of the time is a move and a chance to likeness,
and make a real move toward a certain change.

The only way to become a good and lovely you is to have it all.

Take a chance if only you trust and believe.

The truth is that one is good enough to sustain a complete desire.

Not only to believe but to stay a good level of mind and soul.

You cannot allow downfall upon you when you know the possibility in you.

The beautiful color is splendor.
It creates a brilliant outlook.
It's nice and shiny to look at.

THE FERTILE SOIL OF MY HEART

It's a proportion of wishes.
Nothing too difficult to sort out.

Liberates my desires, always.
No matter the circumstance, it's easier to endure.
It makes me more comfortable.

I am full of love.

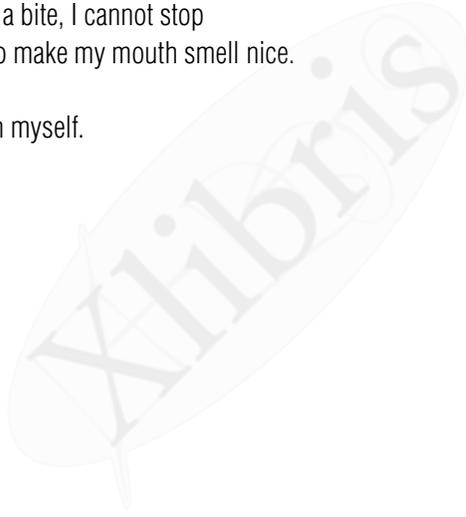
To act diligently in every way to support others.
To hold, move, love and show kindness to people around me.
Maturing easily that I can think of love.
Touching many lives with joy and like them,
not even if I don't get anything in return.

THE SPICE OF MY LIFE

The spice of my life is chili powder.
I add it to water to taste less hot.
I make it thicker to taste more natural.

The color is more clear to just shine on my eyes.
The moment I take a bite, I cannot stop
because it's slow to make my mouth smell nice.

Make me believe in myself.



THE IRONY OF MY LIFE

The only thing I cannot do is undo the past.
Sometimes it's time consuming, mostly because not enough time
to just do what I want.

The only thing I can acquire is my strength.

There too much sacrifice.

Many things do not just come easily the way I
may think at times.

Reversing some ideas for a better chance is
the whole scenario to handle things that are hard to do.

Because I am not sure if they will work or not.

HAVE I BEEN ASKING THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER THE MOST TO ME IN MY LIFE?

The evidence of what is pure like gold.
Real life where there is no more rehearsals.

How serious is life?

Can I invent something that will satisfy my life?

How the life in this world will end.

How much value can I put in myself?

Can I still keep my lifelong friends?

How much I can study and work?

Which animal to love the most?

WHAT ARE MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

To go back to school for nursing.
To go to church.
To save money.
Live in harmony.



CHRISTINA KEADY

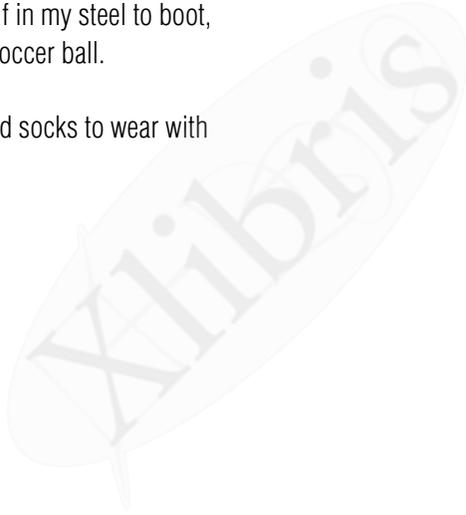
My name is Christina Michelle Keady. I am 35 years old. I was born on March 16, 1985. I was born at St. John's hospital in Santa Monica. I was four pounds three ounces. I was premature. I am Catholic and I was baptized. I had my first holy communion in second grade. I am half Irish and half Filipino. I went to St. Barnabas, Longfellow, Hudson and Jackie Robinson academy. I played Long Beach Junior golf. I went to Long Beach Polytechnic High school and I earned a 4.0 gpa. I was team captain on the golf team my senior year in high school. I was Golfer of the Year. I was one of the athletes nominated for an achievement award for excelling in golf from the mayor of Long Beach. In high school I got involved with drugs. Unfortunately, most of my friends moved on and I was left behind. I finished high school at Brent International School Manila. I went to rehab in the Philippines for six months. I went to Long Beach City College and played golf for city. I like surfing. I was on the swim team in Bellflower. I worked at Lakewood Country Club, Heartwell Golf Course, Recreation Park, Skylinks Golf Course and El Dorado golf course as a starter. I also worked as a wine connoisseur, in the restaurant and as a banquet server. Traveling has been in my blood since I was born, almost. My parents worked for the airlines. My mom for Air Manila and Singapore Airlines, my dad for Air New Zealand, Garuda Indonesia and Korean Airlines. He also worked for Sato Travel. When I was three my mother, father and I went to Mazatlan. We sat in first class` and I wanted the "baby seats" in economy class. In junior high I went to Japan and Hawaii with my girlfriend Melissa. I traveled to Dublin, Ireland alone to meet my cousins. I went there every summer for three years. I went to Rome, Italy, Fiji, Sydney, Australia, England, Hong Kong, Bali, Indonesia, Phuket, Thailand twice, Manila three times, Ankorwat, Cambodia, Maui, I went to male in the Maldiv islands, our hotel room was on the water with a balcony going out to the water, there were many fish. We also went to Singapore. I knew my way around Singapore as I have been there many times and shopped with my friend Sarah while my mom was at work. My grandmother lived in San Francisco and I enjoyed going to fisherman's wharf. I have been sober for over a year and a half. I have a son named Jacob and he is six years old. I like pug dogs.

MY STEEL TOED BOOT

If I were wearing my steel toe boot
I wouldn't have stubbed my toe.
The steel protects my feet.
I would walk miles in them.

I could not play golf in my steel to boot,
but I could kick a soccer ball.

I have a pair of plaid socks to wear with
my steel toe boots.



DANCING WITH MYSELF

When I am dancing with myself, I can dance
and no one is watching.

I can let go and feel there is nothing to be
embarrassed about.

I feel free.

I can feel the rhythm.

I am full of energy.

I am vibrant.

I have a good time with myself.

I enjoy getting down.

GOD AS MY CHOREOGRAPHER

I am a guest in God's house.

He is the host.

He is my director of life.

He creates the dance for my future.

He blesses my friends and family.

He teaches me to be a stronger person.

I pray to Him in my holy hour.

He looks after me.

He guides me to make the right choices.

He is the light of my life.

He speaks time.

God loves me.

He is compassionate.

He arranges the patterns of my dance.

SINCE MARCH, IT HAS BEEN HARD BECAUSE OF COVID THROUGH THE PANDEMIC.

I was supposed to go out on a pass to visit my son in Bakersfield.
My mom got a call from View Heights saying I can't go
out on the pass because there is a virus out there killing people.

It was my birthday on March 16 and I had to stay in the facility.
I did not see my mom for six months until I was discharged to her at Founders.

My grandmother can't leave the senior living home she is at in Riverside.

My mom has gained weight staying inside so much and since the
Jewish community center is closed.

My neighbor has been out of work since she works at Disneyland.

AFTER THE PANDEMIC

After the pandemic, when all of this is over, I am going to travel to the Philippines.

I am going to be able to experience going out and leaving the facility anytime.

I am going to be able to go to the gym.

I am going to go back to Long Beach City College to finish my general education courses after the pandemic.

I am going to try and get a job at the golf course again.

I am going to be able to visit my son.

I OWN THIS ROAD I AM ON

I've been on this road for a year and a half.
I am on the road to sobriety.

Before I got admitted to the hospital, there was a stop sign that said "stop."

The psych evaluation team came to my residence and put me in the hospital.

This road hasn't been easy.

I didn't see my mom for 7 months.
There is a sign that says "no u turn" and I can't go back now.

Before, I was on the road to college.

Playing on the Poly Golf team and moving on to rehab and college.

In Manila I finished high school and then went to Long Beach City College.

WITH MY CAMERA, PEN OR PAINTBRUSH

I will end racism.

All this stuff you hear on TV about a black guy getting shot will end.

People will one day make smarter choices.

I will paint a mural stating “Black Lives Matter.”

A mural next to mine has an image of George Floyd’s face.

Alongside that mural is a painting of Martin Luther King.

IT CAN TAKE MORE THAN A LIFETIME TO GET TO KNOW YOURSELF

I've been in this world for thirty-five years.
There are many things one can know about themselves.

For instance, I am an introvert.
One of my talents is golf.

Self-knowledge is important.
It is good to explore oneself, also to have insight about oneself.
Self-knowledge comes with experience.

I love myself.
I have an international taste for food.

I am a shy person.
I only feel comfortable around people that I'm familiar with.
It usually takes the other person to talk first.

I can't deal with changes.
I always like things the way they were.

I know I have to keep moving.

THE POINTS OF INTEREST ON MY MAP ARE

Growing up, my mom was strict with me.

I am a weak person.

It is hard for me to say no.

I don't want to hurt people's feelings.

I am a good girl.

I don't have any meanness in me.

I am not the kind of person who likes confrontation.

When my mom gets upset with me, I keep my mouth shut.

I let it go from one ear to the other.

I started playing golf when I was four.

And then I played junior golf from 7-17 years old.

I AM THE ARCHITECT OF MY LIFE

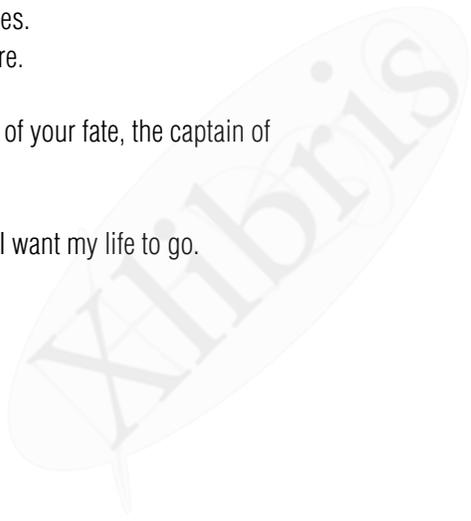
I construct my life and make good or bad choices.
I choose my friends.

My Uncle Elie always told me “you choose your friends, huh?”
Telling me to choose good friends.
Discard the bad ones.
I design its structure.

You are the master of your fate, the captain of
Your soul.

I decide what path I want my life to go.

I build my future.



MY LADDER TO THE SKY

The sky is a window to the spiritual plane.
On this plane, it's where our ancestors and
those who have passed dance.

This is where spirits reign.
On one of my trips, I saw this plane as I
traveled outside of my body and started scraping the sky.

Many souls have come to play here.

“The afterlife also referred to as life after
death or the world to come, or reincarnated is an exercise
in which is essential part of an individual's identity or their stream of
consciousness to have after the dream of
their physical body” (Wikipedia)

IN MY BUFFET OF LIFE

I am content with my state of life right now.

I take time to taste the food and my life.

On my plate is a serving of a beautiful chicken curry dish.

In Bali the buffet was grandiose with an array of foods to choose from.

I had tropical ripe papayas, watermelon, grapes, mangoes, jackfruit, kumquats, lychees, apples, apricots, bananas, kiwis, and honeydew.

There was also fish head curry.

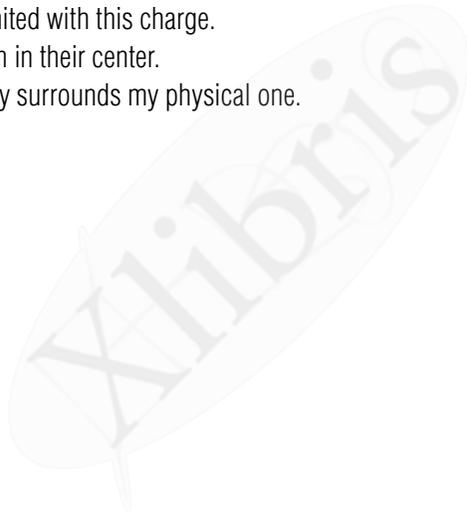
Chicken tikka marsala.

Pizza.

I had lobster bisque soup for the first time.

TASTING THE RAINBOW IS LIKE

Feeling the different colors and vibrations of my aura.
Hues of aquamarine, orange, red, and purple
surround my crown and solar plexus.
These colors have a unique sense and feel.
Each energy center charged with positive energy.
My chakras are ignited with this charge.
Wheels of light turn in their center.
This luminous body surrounds my physical one.



I'VE BEEN ON SHAKY GROUND

I've been on shaky ground and it's felt like an earthquake,
God's upset.
I don't know what is going to happen next.

One time, I was in the hospital and my mom
didn't see me for a month.

There was an earthquake and my roommate
said, "It's a warning, God wants your mother to see you."
I agreed with her.

This ground was unsteady and prone to earthquakes.
There were multiple ones.

Another time I was trying to contact an animal
spirit, and I said, "Hi Casey!"
And right at that moment, "Boom" there was an earthquake,

Finally, after about a month my mother did see me
and brought me mackerel.

THE FERTILE SOIL OF MY HEART

The fertile soil of my heart makes me think of my mother.
She has the biggest heart.
And ever since I've been sober, our relationship
has grown and flourished.
We are friends again.

I have dreams of Aphrodite.
She is the goddess of Fertility.
She exists on another plane.
She took many lovers.
Aphrodite's counterpart was Venus the goddess
of love, sex, beauty, and fertility.

From the "Psychic Eye" I once had a fertility marble stone.
In some schools of thought, a fertility people worship
the Gods and Goddess.

My friend got upset with me for leaving
that strange object at his house.

MY UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

They say you can do anything you set your mind to.

I thought about my golf game.

When I got back, I practiced rigorously.

I prepared for the CIF Championship finals.

I won for Poly against Wilson.

I broke up with my boyfriend.

We had been together years.

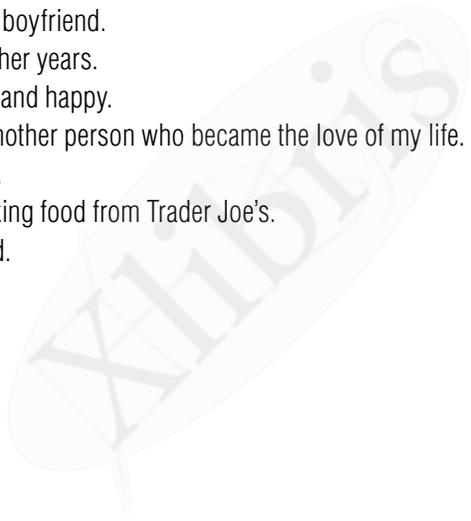
I wanted to be free and happy.

I fell in love with another person who became the love of my life.

He had a girlfriend.

We spent time making food from Trader Joe's.

We made Thai food.

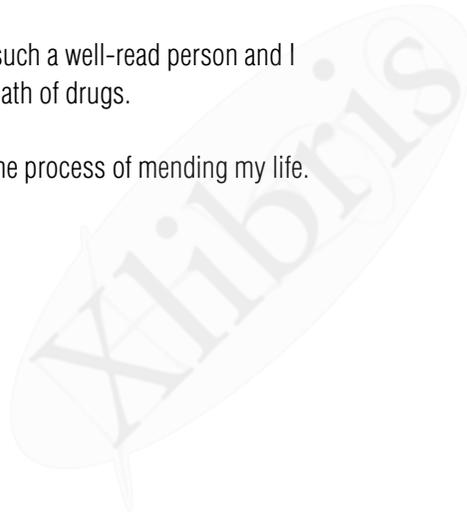


THE IRONY OF MY LIFE

Things changed for me when I became sober.
I looked bright and I wasn't lonely and depressed.
"Sobriety is the condition of not having any measurable levels of effects from alcohol or other drugs." (Wikipedia)

It's ironic that I'm such a well-read person and I chose to take the path of drugs.

Right now, I'm in the process of mending my life.



THE SPICE OF MY LIFE

The spice of my life is garlic salt.
I make bread and sprinkle it with
garlic salt and parmesan cheese.
I put two slices of American cheese and grill it.

The outside of the bread is crusty.
Garlic salt is my favorite spice.

You can put it on French fries, use it
to season ground beef for hamburgers and chili.



AM I ASKING THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER THE MOST IN MY LIFE

Yes I am asking the questions that matter most to me in my life.
Am I taking care of myself?

How am I feeling?

Good, hopeful.

I am grateful for my family that I love so much.

Where do I want to be in the next five years or ten years?

Playing golf on the golf course, working at a golf course.

What am I good at? Golf.

What am I bad at? Saying no to people.

What makes me tired? Running errands.

What is the most important thing in my life?

My Mother.

WHAT ARE MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

One of my greatest accomplishments would be winning for the Poly Golf Team in high school.

Going to college, playing for Long Beach City College women's golf team.

Taking a creative writing class with my teacher Frank Gaspar.

Getting straight A's my junior year in the Pacific Rim academy in high school.

Writing Hiragana and Katagana in Japanese.

Taking Japanese for twelve years.

WHAT DRIVES MY CURIOSITY AND WHAT MAKES ME WANT TO LEARN MORE

“**C**uriosity is triggered by challenging common beliefs; violates expectations by suggesting something small can create dramatic results.”
(Copy blogger.com)

When we try to learn new things, it really follows the path of reward of dopamine, which is the neurotransmitter that is associated with reward in our brains.

I am curious and wonder when is covid going to be over.

I am curious to know what Founders will be like when we can leave at any time we want.

Maybe then I will get a job.

Maybe when the vaccine comes out, covid will be over in springtime.

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOU? WHERE DO YOU FIND THESE PEOPLE?

Positive people bring out the best traits in me.
Good qualities in a person: for example, being honest and taking responsibility for your actions are admirable qualities.

Adaptability and compatibility are great traits that can help you get along with others.

Drive and determination will help keep you going no matter what.

Compassion and understanding mean you relate well to others.” (Example your dictionary.com)

My Auntie is a very positive person.
She always said “be positive.”

When my granddad was in the hospital, he said he wanted to live for his granddaughter.

BARBARA VANK

I was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts. I grew up mostly in New Hampshire. We moved to the country, and I had a lot of animals and a big huge garden. I went to a brand-new Jr. High school where I got good grades. One time when I was in English class my teacher put on a song and had the class write something about the song. Well, I wrote something, and the teacher admired it so much that she held it up to the class and read it. When I went to high school, I got a B+ in pre-algebra. I wasn't doing as excellent as I could have. I smoked marijuana, I even ended up getting kicked out of school. I ended up in Y.D.C. I quit that and I ended up getting a job on the grounds. I worked in a barn taking care of some animals. I worked over the summer for two months. When I left there, I joined the church. Then I ended up getting kicked out of the house. I got a job and a place to live, sleep and eat in other words. Then one night I ended up getting on a fight and coming to California.

MY ROAD TO RECOVERY

I would like to start with my road to recovery.

My recovery from things and crazy ideas of a mental illness.

What actually caused my mental illness.

I try to forget about it, but it's the topic here.

There's a lot of things actually that seem to be happening to me.

For instance there are people that don't like me.

I'm sorry I wrote that.

I have for myself a good past.

There may have been a few upsets.

Like being sent to someplace for juvenile delinquency.

But that did not make me stupid or a bad person.

I OWN THIS ROAD

The road belongs to the reasons for what I do with my life.
To make the best decisions to stay out of trouble.
I own this road.

There's going to be sign posts, detours.
Take control of this road.
What decisions did you take to end up homeless?

I abandoned the road I was on.
I decided to take the right path in life.
By avoiding being homeless.

By doing the right thing.
I don't want to end up in prison, staying in a hospital.

I want to recover on this road.
I want to do the right things.
I want to reach my destination.
What I mean by that is what are sign posts.
Some sign posts are good or they could be
devious if I make the wrong decisions.

As I write today it's going on the holidays.
The holidays are very special.
What do they mean?

Detours.

They only happen if you let it.

I PICTURE MYSELF ON A JETTY.

I am halfway to the end.
I turn and walk back to shore.

The moon is very beautiful.
I end up with people who give me
a place that is warm dry and comfortable.

Write my autobiography there is still
hope for a meaningful life.

This could have an impact on someone else's life.

I walked down the hall.

I yelled not too loudly.

I got frightened.

Something scared me.

MY CHOREOGRAPHED LIFE, MY PAINTED LIFE

Life is like a painting.
You can do a painting by numbers as I have in the past.

But comparing my painted life in reality you would say my life is like a painting.

It tells a picturesque life,
in such a meaningful way.

My choreographed life.
Think about your functional life.
I have had times where I thought about functioning.
I didn't think too highly about it.
I thought it sounded funny.

The legacy project.
Imagine these things.
Your favorite book.
What was there that was the best day of your life?

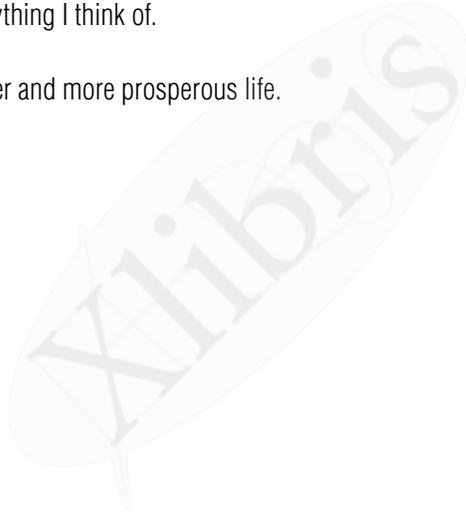
My sixth grade Christmas.
It was because of the gifts I got were better
than any I've had in the past.

I AM A GOD LOVER.

I think of life as being clean and happy.
But in the end life is what you make it.

Make the right choices.
And my choices that I make
would be like everything I think of.

I would want a fuller and more prosperous life.



WHAT ARE MY GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS?

I can say that I have a lot of them.

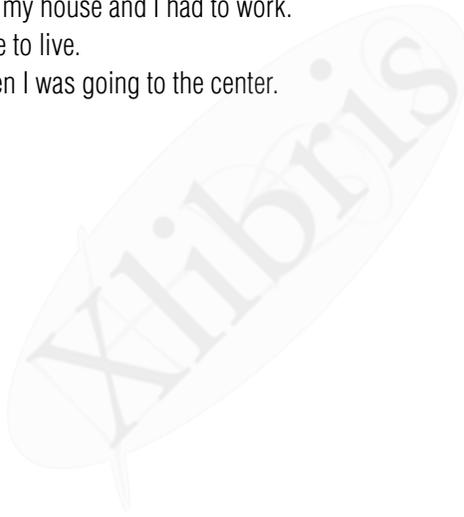
I held a job for four months in the state of California.

I had a lot of schooling.

I was kicked out of my house and I had to work.

I had to find a place to live.

Another one is when I was going to the center.



WHAT DRIVES MY CURIOSITY AND MAKES ME WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Who I really am?

Who I would really want to be?

Will I make it?

What would really be the outcome of it?

Will my dreams come true?



WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE BRING OUT THE BEST TRAITS IN YOU?

Sometimes good people.
They are nice to me.
They do nice things for me.
For example, my people that are
friends and we do good things.
Church, stores, work and roommates.



BEING ON A LOOKOUT FOR COVID-19.

Having been equipped with an “abundance”
of necessities that are needed.

What has it been like living in this epidemic?
I feel paranoid, not in a negative way but
I do try my hardest.
I have worries.

Since March when this epidemic started, it
has been pretty difficult.
Only because I've been experiencing pain.
I have met, a couple of times with Jehovah's Witnesses.

She is in a wheelchair.
She sent me some papers in the mail.
I filled out the first, which was on a book
she sent along with a bible.

I go to day care but it is closed
because of this epidemic.
They have been keeping in contact with me.
Which I really appreciate.

SOMEONE FROM YOUR PAST ENTERS YOUR LIFE, WHO IS IT AND WHAT DO THEY GIVE YOU?

A family member, my younger sister.

She passed away.

Her name was Margaret.

She bought me a lot of nice things.

She got me into Board and Care homes.

She became a beautician.

I studied the same thing.



IF YOU COULD LOOK INTO THE FUTURE, WOULD YOU?

Yes.
Because no matter what it takes, I would love
for all my real dreams to come true.



WAS THERE A MOMENT IN YOUR LIFE THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING FOR YOU?

No or maybe you could say yes.
I was in a bad fight before I came to California.
I don't know exactly how it changed
necessarily everything but it don't mean
no big deal.



MY LUGGAGE

My luggage has wheels.
But it belongs to someone else.
Mine is a suitcase that I came to California with.
No matter where I went my luggage
went with me.
I still have it to this very day.



THE PAINTED BRAIN

We can succeed at challenges.
When we face challenges, we are facing possibilities.
When we face these possibilities it's a good thing, it can be fun.
We can say we are brutally muted, regretfully muted.
Joyfully unmuted heart capable of love.

Painfully muted.

We can apply voiceless whispering to mute.
Color to mute abundantly unmuted.
Black.

Painfully muted.
Bitterly muted.
Sadly muted.
Regretfully muted.
Helplessly muted.
Joyful, unmuted, the unwanted.
The unwanted heart, culture.
The unwanted mind.
Painfully muted.
Someone else controls you.
You don't have a voice.
When I'm painfully muted it makes me feel bad about myself.
I don't mean that it definitely means that I'm not a somebody because I know

that I am somebody.
Think about you, functional mind.
Or your choreographed life.
The unmuted heart.
Undo the fact you are muted.
For example.
You can do something about it.
You can feel good about yourself.



HOW HAS FOUNDERS HELPED YOU?

For its ways of teaching us how to be positive.
Gives us some incentives for being independent.
Having my independence means much to me.
In other words I can achieve for myself.
I mean, how am I gonna have a life?
I would love the beautiful things life has to offer.



WHAT WAS YOUR MOST FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE?

It has to be when I was walking down the hall
one night.

I screamed uncontrollably.

Something very horrible went through my mind.



HOW HAS HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION AFFECTED YOUR LIFE?

It helped me, in a good way not bad.

It's another way of having piece of mind, all our own.



HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT HAVING A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION?

I don't mind.



WHAT DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW ABOUT WHAT IT'S LIKE LIVING WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS?

I would be glad to encourage people to understand that it turns you into a good person.

Yes, you have to take your medication for it.

You become an intellect.

It makes you want to learn at the same time

Being a little confused.

As the years go on you get well.

You can cope with it easier.

WHAT HAVE I DONE IN THE PAST YEAR THAT HAS SERVED THE GREATER GOOD?

Staying positive, being friendly.
Just doing the best I can with it.
Thinking about things institute.
Sometimes I feel like I'm in the wrong.



AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP?

I wanted to be a schoolteacher.
Now as I'm older I am into cosmetology.



WHAT DID I DO TO MAKE SOMEONE HAPPY TODAY?

Knowing that I had a conversation
with someone.

By having a positive conversation.



DID YOU EVER HAVE A YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY?

Yes, one time I was in a car on my way to see my family and my other family member who was driving the car got upset and I jumped out of the car.



IF YOU COULD LOOK INTO THE FUTURE WOULD YOU?

Yes, but it's very difficult because I know what
I want to do with my life.

It is very difficult to be able to do what
it is that I would want to do.



What Was the Strangest Dream You've Ever Had?
One time I had a dream I was falling out of bed.



WHAT MY SHADOW REVEALS ABOUT ME

It says I have a big heart.

I am kind.

It reflects what I can say about myself.

Things like if my shadow shows my size: I have a good life, I'm loved, so much more about me I'm calm, it reveals the shape of a good person.

Not what is said against myself as a horrible person.

Often times I am cast into some kind of existence, for instance, people that don't like me or, my body don't look right.

Or somebody thinking they are better than me.

Making the heart understand what the mind knows.

It means that my life does not mean I should constantly accuse myself of bad things about myself.

But my heart understands that its other people making me feel this way.

Forget what they say, it comes from the heart, "it's good."

WHAT DOES PROSPEROUS MEAN TO ME?

It means being able to accomplish things on your own.

Take baby steps and the big things will take care of themselves.

Taking care of oneself.

Budgeting your money, being positive.

Not worrying about obstacles that seem to get in the way.

They are not real they are only auditory hallucinations.

I think you really have to accept your feelings about yourself.

Think positive and be very careful no matter what.

Think of a hobby, something you would enjoy doing and thinking very highly of yourself because of it.

1. Doing things right.
Like keeping a hobby, you don't want to make mistakes.
Everyone makes mistakes.
It's very hard not to.
Starting my autobiography
2. Doing the right things in life.
Once you do the right, which are taking things
into effort.
What to write.
3. Making the heart understand, there's a thin line
between love and hate.
Align your passion with intellect.
Think of things that take your mind off
the "bad" feelings.

HOW TO LIVE A LIFE OF IMPORTANCE

By taking care of yourself and being good.
Getting over little obstacles that get in your way.
Thinking positive.
Knowing that you are a somebody.
You need to have this certain way about
you that others will like.

This is important.

Everybody has the need, which in other words
is a collective unconscious.

Gravity, you are given rights.

What about non-Democracy?
There is enough in the world to let you
become who you want to be.

WHAT DOES HUMILITY MEAN TO YOU?

Humbling yourself.
It means not being yourself.
You don't want to be better than everyone else.

It's about taking up the right thing in life.
If each of us take up too much space we're gonna be
very uncomfortable.

It's about taking up just your space.



HOW IS LIFE LIKE A GARDEN?

If you have a lot of weeds it drowns out the whole garden.

Life is like a journey.

It's an adventure.

Like when you go out on a jetty.

I hurt my left ankle on the rocks.

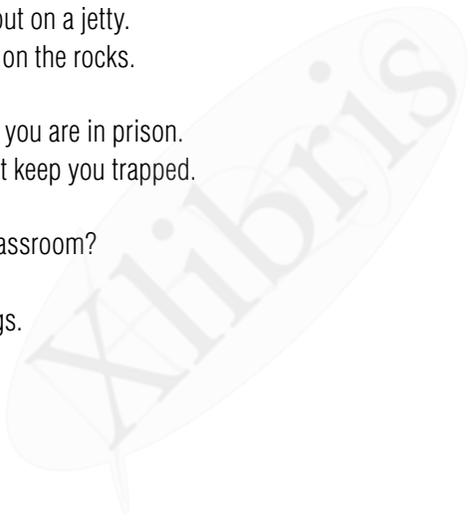
For example, when you are in prison.

I wish they wouldn't keep you trapped.

How is life like a classroom?

It inspires you.

It's explaining things.



SOUL SHINE

Does your soul shine?
If it does shine in the world
how strong is it?
Is it positive?
What does it do to the world?
It's bright, it is strong, it changes the world.

It gets someone to think how "you" can shine.

There are so many ways, like I'm a good person.

I will have to expect this even if there will
be people there that don't like me.

It's a life abundance.
What does it show to others?
It radiates a better quality of life and love.
There is a reality there for example.
How to live your life in a good way.
That makes you happy.
It brightens up your spirits, if you let it.

ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

Set a standard for yourself.
Make plans and goals for yourself like
doing well at what you do.
Read a book or watch a movie.
What are my hobbies?

I like cosmetology-set a goal, follow
out the plan.
Be totally positive about it.
What is it that I am doing this for?
Well for me I want to someday have
something really nice happening for me.

Step after selling, take the initiative keep it
positive.
Here is some information from an interview.
He is applying for a job.
I would like to gain more out of life.
I worked as a sales associate.
It takes being a good diplomat.
I would not give the key to the store to anyone.
I would keep things confidential.
My time commitment would be a year.

What are some of those little obstacles?
How will I get by?
I have ways of "achieving."
I like being humble.
What I consider humble is by being happy.
Happy Physically

I know I have to get over these little obstacles.
What will the inner light that I shine do to the world?
It will brighten my feelings about myself.

Take care of small things and the big things
“will” take care of the small ones.

What are my strategies for coping with stress?
I think of little things to take time to read or
write, keep a journal, take up a hobby.
Focus on experiences of the past.
What are some of the small things that make me feel content.
I like to knit and sew.
I like to swim.
I knitted a whole sweater once.

I am Schizophrenic I hear voices.
The Dr. had to adjust my medication.
We want to be in the mode of doing and
being the full potential of the human being that I am.
I am becoming the true self.
I am impowered.
The irony of my life.
I can speak by experience.
Take a good look inside myself.
What am I really doing?
Is it something that's experienced?

What do I really want from life?
I would do anything for my dreams to come true.
I would do anything for my dreams to come true.
I have secret plans and dreams.
My arc of imagination which could be anytime
from now.
I see myself accomplishing tasks.

Maybe accomplishing my dealing with my mental illness.

Schizophrenia.

What is this mental illness?

So, my arc of imagination would be that it is a long or short arc.

My arc trajectory would lead to an accomplished goal,
my accomplished goal is definitely heading me in the right direction.

“My” direction means a lot to me by



MY HOPE WAS RESTORED WHEN I HAD GOOD HEALTH

I convinced myself that I can have something.

I have to put myself first.

I mean something.

I wonder what goes on in others when
they treat me the way they do.



BEHIND MY REAR-VIEW WINDOW

Behind my rear-view window, I see something go by.
It makes it look like it did something
and I can accomplish something very important.
I can compare it to learning something.

It passed by me.
It was something good.
It put forth the effort like going to class
in high school and getting something rewarded.

I can take a situation like this and actually
look at it
see it more like a
piece of work done with much effort.

When I write, try to explain it with more
examples.

Like keeping a journal.

ACHIEVEMENTS

People are aware of achieving goals.
Self-awareness, how can it affect your life?
How does it help me help myself?
By what really motivates me.
Telling what I feel like being me.
I could say contentment.
Living my life.
Change vs stability do we have motivations?
I do.
I try my best.
Three hard core situations that
control my life.

1. Respect for myself.
2. Wanting to finally come close to accomplishments.
3. God, believing in him.

What faith do I have that will guide me?
Love, responsibility and spirituality.

WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY

When it comes down to taking drugs and not taking drugs.

Well sexually to get more genuine happiness.

What you like to do, my happiness set point.

What do I want to achieve through endurance?
and happiness.

What will endure this.

Maybe by having a laptop.

Being a writer.

In three words, teaching, making, and meaning
system.

There are certain things in life; money is a
meaning making system.

Cultural awareness.

Martin Seligman talks about these things.

And all of this that I wrote about has nothing
to do with what scares me the most.

When I get out of the shower, I deserve to feel good.

WITH MY CAMERA OR MY PEN IN MY HAND

If I would write about terrorism or racism I would have to respect the fact that they are sending the "Troops."

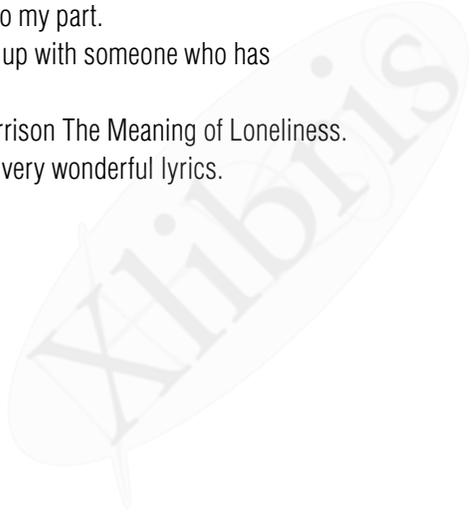
Please bring them home safe.

When I look at it from my point of view I really do try my best to do my part.

Maybe by meeting up with someone who has experience.

A song by Van Morrison The Meaning of Loneliness.

In the song he has very wonderful lyrics.



IT COULD TAKE MORE THAN A LIFETIME TO GET TO KNOW MYSELF

I think that is a long time.

I think it's a wonderful feeling to be able to get to know yourself.

I've been in this world for many years.

Now I've got to know myself.

It will take more than a lifetime to get to know myself.

I know that a lot can really be accomplished.

I don't really know how to put it into words the way it should sound.

It could be easily written or explained.

For instance, I am very well aware of what's going on around me.

I can describe it by saying I'm a God lover.

What would it leave me from there.

What would my life really be like if I had no positive outlook on life.

Or you can say what should I do?

In other words.

1 Am I capable of it?

2 What could I do to enhance my life?

THESE ARE MY POINTS OF INTEREST

On my map my points of interest.
The points of interest on my map.
Joy, wellness, love, and happiness.
What is so unique about you.

As a kid I had nice dolls and clothes.
I used to play in the sprinkler, but as I
got older not too very much older we
meaning my family, moved to the country.
We bought a big house with one acre of land.
I did the house cleaning every weekend.
I went to a brand-new Junior High.
A girl told me I had bad breath right in front
of the class, science class.

I miss my pool, my family and I got together
one summer on my 7th grade summer.
I swam in it, I swam in it all day, the weather
was so hot and the water was ice cold.
New Hampshire Londonderry.

If I had the chance I would be able to do the best I can.
I would have nice clothes I would do whatever it
takes for my dreams who I really am.

The irony of my life.
What things make my life good and what
makes my life bad,
I consider nice happy things and thankful
thoughts and ideas.

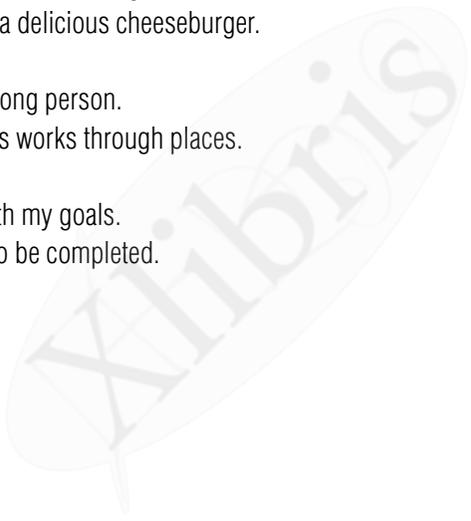
The trails of my hikes.
Going the extra mile.
Facing obstacles.
It's a rough and winding road.
Sticks and stones do hurt.
They are painful you can slip and fall.

I feel better when I have pride through some
other source, for instance.
Finishing a task, like making something.
It could be anything.

Something completed like taking
a shower or eating a delicious cheeseburger.

Yes, I am a very strong person.
My definition of this works through places.

Like keeping up with my goals.
These goals have to be completed.



ALBERT GARCIA

I was born in Abilene, Texas and came to California as a child with my family. We lived in Lakewood, and I attended Killingsworth Junior High School in Los Angeles and graduated from Artesia High School in 1978. After high school I began working with Way Out Ministries – Kids Corner and New Hearts Bible Study. I also worked at Peter C. David pipeline as a supervisor and I was there nine years. I then went to Pro Tires and Wheels and I have been here for seven years. I have been at Founders for 15 years and I enjoy Founders.



LIFE IN THE INDIAN POW-WOW

I was invited to go to an Indian Pow-Wow in Hawaiian Gardens, then got to spend the night at Fetty Med Junior High. Then I got up and was asked if I would like to go to breakfast.

Usually in the Pow-Wow's there is a fire circle and you can offer up your own personal sacrifice and let it burn.

We have two different types of Indian dancing, you respect Mother Earth and remove your hats to show respect to the Indian Tribe.

We had all different sorts of booths where you can buy souvenirs.

I got to dance with an Apache girl and I really loved her, this was the highlight of my night.

LIFE IN VICTORY OUTREACH

It was a beautiful sight stepping into Victory Outreach.

When I first arrived, I was a stranger.

I didn't know anyone.

I felt empty and alone.

I met someone and he introduced me to
a Pastor.

The Pastor is spiritual and is a big help to me.

I didn't have a Bible he generously gave me one.

I looked up different scriptures like John 3:16

Reading the Bible boosted my spirit.

All of a sudden, I realized Jesus was the only way out!

Gradually, I felt uplifted.

Now I can always depend on my Pastors and leaders
of the church.

LIFE IN THE DESERT

Living in the desert can be fun.
I remember when my mom and my dad used to go out to the desert on the weekends.

My friend she was very nice.

One time she took us to Ft. Irwin in Bakersfield.

My mom would pick up rocks to paint them.

The nearest town is about a mile away.

So I got out of my ATC-110 went to the grocery store KOA.

I remember what we also did in the desert was to “moonlight”

“Moonlighting” is when we would go to the cemetery and fill up barrels with water.

When I was staying in Lakewood, we met this guy out in the desert, and he would show us the property that me and my dad had.

Me and my brother went out to Owl Canyon and to our surprise, we could see big eagle eggs.

I tried to make it up the hill to where my brother was but my hands were too slippery.

She took us to Calico Days up on the mountains.

I remember I only had \$140.00 in cash for my vacation, and then this lady came up to me and she asked me “can you take a picture of my family?”

I took the picture and in turn she bought me a large Pepsi from the Calico Saloon.

LIFE AS A MANAGER

I only started out with nothing and then all of a sudden two jobs popped up!

I was working.

I was making a lot of money.

Then all of sudden I had to quit my job and

I went over to a tire shop in Norwalk.

I met up with my boss.

Everyday I get up and leave around 6am to get to work before 8am.

Then he arrives, he always greets me with a smile and says it's always good to have you around the shop.

Mostly on the weekend we're full, everybody gets payroll on Saturday.

Work can be slow during the week but the weekends it gets busy.

We have people pouring in.

It's difficult because I have to run errands.

When I come back, he gives me the size of tire I have to pick up.

I am very trusted at the shop.

I feel very good when at the end he tells me

I do a good job.

When I was very young, I was living with my mom and dad.

We used to go up to the old ranch which we would call "The Getaway."

We would spend our weekends there.

My big brother would come with us.

It was a very nice place to get away from the city.

We raised hogs at the old ranch.

My dad would drive down in the Chevy and I would go with him to help feed the hogs.

We would go into town and pick up food that the restaurants got rid of for the hogs.

My mom would always have special food ready for us when we came back.

I really miss it because in 1973 there was a fire that consumed the old ranch.



WALTER COHEN

My name is Walter Jacob Cohen. I was born on December 7, 1989. I lived with my parents in the same house with my brother and my dad, my brother still lives there. My mom and dad were divorced when I was about 12 years old and my mom moved a couple of miles away. I lived half the time with my dad and half the time with my mom. My dad had a good paying job really good and he would stay there until about 6:30 every day.

I was in high school and graduated in 2008 from Burbank High School in Burbank, Ca. which is where I've lived my whole life and where I was born. I had a pretty decent time in high school and graduated with no trouble except for getting in trouble with the police from marijuana once or twice and developed a habit of smoking marijuana when I was in high school. I had a girlfriend in high school for over a year but we broke up. After high school I went to college for one or two semesters but then dropped out.

I wanted to continue learning so I went to the library and checked out some books over a period of time but one of the main books I checked out is what's called the Septuigant Bible which is the original Greek translation. It really changed my life. Having been raised Jewish I had read the Old Testament or at least some of it and knew the stories such as Moses and the red sea and David and Goliath. Being Jewish I had never read the gospel of Jesus and once I did, I found it to be a life changing and mind altering experience.

Jesus spoke of being a better person and accomplishing better things and was a great person, a healer and a miracle worker and unlike any person I'd ever heard about before. Having had an awakening from listening to him I became a better person dedicated to studying the Bible and knowing God. Shortly after I became a Christian, I started getting in trouble with the law again about two years ago I was arrested, and the police were going to charge me with a felony which could have been catastrophic for my life. But they said if I

would go to a program, they would completely drop one charge and turn the other to a misdemeanor. So, I completed the program and they said I needed to stay off drugs and alcohol for another 6 months. So that's my story yeah.



IN MY MOMENTS OF SILENCE

In my moments of silence, I am reminded that I am never alone as Jesus said in John 8;29 “He who sent me is with me. The father has not left me alone for I always do those things that please him.”

When I am still, I am reminded that God is not found in an earthquake of a whirlwind but a small quiet voice. Psalm 46;10 reads. “Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted in the earth.” And Kings 19;11-13 “Then he said God go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord and behold the Lord passed by, and great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind, and after the wind and earthquake, the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a still small voice.”

The Lord was found in a still small voice and being quiet and still brings us close to God.

I AM THE ARCHITECT OF WHAT I DO

I am the architect of what I do with my time but the Lord orders my steps.

Though I try and organize and plan out my day God gives me the things I really need and created everything I do.

Anyway, God is the architect of my life.

In heaven there is a veil between God and his angels because no one can look on God and still live and that veil is written on all the deeds of everyone who lived or will live.

God already knew me before I was born, and God is in control of my life.

MY LADDER TO THE SKY

My ladder to the sky is the rapture that is supposed to happen before the tribulation on Earth when the antichrist will reign and it will be the worst point in human history to be on earth.

For believers in Jesus Christ my ladder to the sky is the rapture when there will be a door open in heaven and we will all be taken up to heaven.

It will be at the beginning of the seven-year period and a time of great persecution for everyone on earth but we will be saved if as Jesus says since you have kept my word I will keep you from the hour of that which will come on the world to test it.

MY BUFFET OF LIFE

In my buffet of life, I have seen the Kardashians eating on Keeping up with the Kardashians. they had pizza, cheeseburgers and salad all at the same time.

I love doing that too, having lots of food. Once I had a burrito, cheeseburger, fries and a Stromboli. I love to eat pizza with French fries as well. Sometimes I will have pasta with pizza but that's an obvious one.

In my life I've eaten many very good foods and I am very grateful to God for all of them and I hope I will be able to have buffet style meals much more in my life.

I know in heaven at the end of time there will be a wedding feast at the marriage of the lamb to his bride as well so I hope I am invited to that as well.

TASTING THE RAINBOW

Tasting the rainbow is like the skittles slogan isn't it?
I guess it tastes good but something that is like the rainbow that tasted good also is fruit loops, they gave us those in jail.

Rainbows represent the promise that God made to Noah that he would never again destroy the earth by a flood. He promised him he would never destroy all flesh again and the rainbow is a sign of that covenant between God and us.

The rainbow is beautiful with so many colors on it. Next time God destroys the earth the bible tells us it will be by fire and not water as well. Also there is supposedly a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

I HAVE BEEN ON SHAKY GROUND

I've been on shaky ground and it's felt like I'd gotten myself into a bad situation. It felt like an earthquake and I didn't know if it was the end or not.

Being in jail was like that.

I didn't know if I would be okay though I thought I would and I was but experienced some bad things while I was in jail like being in the HOH or what they call solitary confinement.

There is a part at the end of the bible where there is a great earthquake such a great one as has ever been since men were on earth and the cities of the nation's fell.

Being on shaky ground is unnerving but you have to trust God.

THE SPICE OF MY LIFE

They say variety is the spice of life.
Usually, I think about this when it comes to food, if you have the same food over and over again and you get no variety in what you eat then you get tired of what you're eating and stop liking it.

Also, it may not be very good over and over.

Same with life.

Although Bruce Lee did say he's not scared of the fighter who knows 10,000 moves but the fighter who has practiced one move 10,000 times.

HAVE I BEEN ASKING THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER THE MOST TO ME IN MY LIFE?

Yes, I believe I have, and I always look to the bible for answers to my questions.

The bible is God's word and God can't and doesn't lie.

I ask myself about the trouble I've gotten into and God reminds me that bad things happen to good and bad people the same, the same thing happens to them both.

God reminds me that through punishment for sin there is forgiveness.

But punishment or not God, has paid by penalty by dying on the cross.

Although all of us fall short he did not he lived a sinless life. I ask when will he come back, and my suffering be over?

Will it be in my lifetime or after I die?

I know that he is coming at a time I do not expect. Have I been asking the questions that matter the most to me in life?

I think so because I know myself very well and I know God as well.

WHAT DRIVES MY CURIOSITY AND MAKES ME WANT TO LEARN MORE?

When God says seek my face and the bible says your face,
I will seek I believe that's what fuels me to know God.

And that is where my curiosity lies in the knowledge of God.

I am interested in the bible and other bible related books.
In a gospel not in the bible Jesus says he will show you things
no man has heard.

Also, in the biblical gospel of Mathew Chapter 13 verse 11
Jesus says to his disciples the knowledge of the secrets of the
kingdom of heaven has been given to you.

WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE BRING OUT THE BEST IN ME AND WHERE DO I FIND THEM?

I would say that fellow Christians bring out the best in me. Also, in the bible at 2 Corinthians 6;14 it reads “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness.”

To be yoked means to be with that person.

Again 2 John 1;10-11 tells us “If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.”

We are told anyone who is not a believer in Jesus is still in the darkness and performing wicked works.

There is a great community of Christians mostly everywhere you go. I would say fellow believers in Christ Jesus bring out the best in me and the bible tells us not to even have anything to do with people who don't believe in Jesus though the bible does tell us to pursue peace with all people Hebrews 12:14

THE FERTILE SOIL OF MY HEART

The fertile soil of my heart, the Lord Jesus gives a parable (a parable meaning a riddle or a mystery) in which is called the parable of the sower starting Mathew



CHAPTER 13 VERSE 3 HE SAYS “A FARMER WENT OUT TO SOW HIS

Seed. As he was scattering the seed some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow.

But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and they withered because they had no root. Other seeds fell among the thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown” and the Lord continues and says “whoever has ears let them hear”

Jesus tells his disciples that the people do not understand the parable because as the prophet Isaiah says “seeing they do not see” As Jesus continues, he explains the parable to his disciples Mathew Chapter 13 verse 19 “When anyone hears the message about it, the evil comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path, the seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and once receives it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the work, they fall away quickly. The seed falling among thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but to worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

The parable he tells is talking about the Kingdom of God and Jesus later says in another parable he sows the good seed and the devil sows the weeds.

Jesus plants the seeds of the kingdom of God in our hearts providing us salvation when we believe in him and confess it with our mouth.

What three qualities would you most like to be associated with your reputation?

Patience, Honesty Hard-headed

I could go on but the question asked for three

These are my first thoughts not necessarily the best answer,

What drives your curiosity and makes you want to learn more?

When God says know me, so I want to learn more scripture.

What skills do you have now that you didn't have five years ago?

Being able to relate to people who have gone to jail.

What are some uncertainties you are currently experiencing?

When I'll be able to go home.

What allows you to live with the uncertainties in a way that feels right.

That life is getting better TV, Phone and always I know one day I'll be in paradise when I die anyway.

JUAN CERVANTES

I was born in Makati in the Philippines and moved to the US California in 1983. I graduated high school from Rialto High California in 1996 and went to university at Woodbury University in Burbank California. I became a US citizen in 2003. My career in the apparel industry started in 2004. I was an apparel and graphic apparel designer for 14 years. My son was born in 2013. I became mentally ill in 2014 which I have struggled with to this day. I was diagnosed with psychosis and schizophrenia. My recovery has been an ongoing work in progress. Because of mental illness, I was hospitalized in multiple hospitals which made me permanently disabled. I moved into Founder's House of Hope in 2018. I have been able to manage my symptoms and have been able to find God in my life. The following poems were part of my recovery process. My inspiration was based on what I have learned using coping skills for me to be able to manage my disability. I hope that my insights in my poems will be relatable to others with mental disabilities. Thank you for reading...and may God be with you.

I dedicate this book to my family and others who are living with a mental health condition.

THE ROAD I AM ON

The road I am on is a path to stability and independence. Six years ago the path I was taking sharply turned into a difficult path.

I was diagnosed with psychosis.

The “signposts” were very unclear.

After the psychiatrist prescribed my medication, it was difficult to know how I would recover.

The road I am on is now much clearer to see the “sign-posts.”

Recovery is clearer now since I no longer have symptoms of psychosis or schizophrenia.

CAMERA

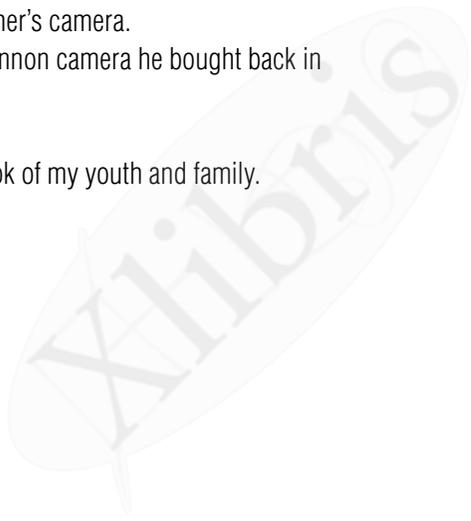
Photography can be used to influence opinions.
change perspectives, and stir emotions.

A camera can be used as a weapon in those ways.

I remember my father's camera.

It was a 35 mm Cannon camera he bought back in
the 70's.

The pictures he took of my youth and family.



HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS IMPACTED MY LIFE

Since March 2020 we have been coping with the covid-19 lockdown. Everyday has made an adjustment in lifestyle, social distancing, wearing a mask, washing hands has been mandatory to everyday life.

Stores and restaurants have been closed down or reduced capacity.

Buying food has been a costly change, I have used a food

Delivery service to get all the restaurant food and they charge a service fee and require a tip.

It has been convenient enough but is more costly to have food delivery.

Another major change is that we have all reduced or completely cut-off all social interactions with family and friends.

Being in a board and care there are rules I have had to abide by to reduce any risk of contracting covid-19.

I miss my family, whom I have not seen since September.

MY MOMENTS OF SILENCE

In my moments of silence, I am able to reflect on my daily life. Sometimes I do this while in the shower, as I let the water wash over my head.

I am able to concentrate and relax my thoughts.

Often, I think about my family, my son, and think about the blessings that I am fortunate to have.

In my moments of silence, I shake my head; I have tardive dyskinesia, this is a reminder that God is with me, his presence is an acknowledgement that God exists in my moments of silence thoughts.

Sometimes I have a moment of silence when I smoke a cigarette, the smoke fills my lungs and I cough and break the silence.

IN MY REAR-VIEW MIRROR

In my rear-view mirror, I see an ambitious young man
looking to make his mark in the world.

Youthful, optimistic, and naive.

Knowing what I know now in the middle of my life, on life's
highway toward an unknown destination.

Expectations of life's open road has me taking a detour, as I
weave in and out of life's challenges like managing my mental
health.

Like a detour of construction in the road I have to go over,
under, around, sometimes to move forward you must first
go around, step backward, and adapt to the situation.

I see in my rear-view mirror all the detours and challenges
in my life, finally I think I can look forward and start to
reach for my goals again.

More seasoned, more experienced, salty, I am ready to look
forward but must keep what I've seen/learned from what
is in my rear-view mirror.

MY ARC OF IMAGINATION

My arc's trajectory is on a steady path towards success.
It is long and is a steady incline.

Building a portfolio, creating projects, learning new skills, taking photography courses, and re-writing a resume.

I am able to save money and I want to buy a car by April 2021.
The total amount of money that I will save will be approximately 8-10 thousand dollars.

It will be enough to buy a 6-10 year old car, with one hundred thousand miles.
With a car, my goal will be to apply for job opportunities in Los Angeles and Orange county.

Another goal is to build better communication with my son's mother so I can eventually get her to go on skype with me.
Thoughts leads to words that become actions.
Positive thoughts, healthy mind, and actions are necessary to achieve goals.

THE SPICE OF LIFE

The spice of life is so many things, people, places, and experiences.

Working in the clothing industry, I have been fortunate enough to travel to many places.

Those experiences are like spices added to my boiling cauldron of life.

Living in New York for seven years, I made friends with people of all nationalities.

Eating foods from different countries, Chinese, Peru, Indian, and Cuban, I tried their dishes.

This all adds to the spice in my life.

THE IRONY OF MY LIFE

The irony of my life is when I met my son's mother
till my son's birth up to today.

The irony is that the woman of my life changed my
life significantly.

She changed my life in every way now I haven't seen her
and my son in five years.

I used to spend every waking minute with them now I can
only text them a few times a month.

The irony is all my time used to be about my son and his
mother, now I have to communicate only via text.
I pray that God will bring us back together here in
California. . . . that would bring the irony back full circle.

CYNTHIA LATHAM

I was born in Garden Grove, California and had dreams of being a writer and librarian. I took care of children and read a lot of books. I have two sisters. We played in the backyard and I made a garden because my sisters wanted me to. We had a swing set. My mom made porcelain dolls and we played crochet and Monopoly, King Oil, Risk and other table games. My mom had me sew doll bodies. We got paid for our work. We helped out in their business Dolly Crafts and then it was called Kaiser Kreations. My dad made doll furniture, rocking cradles, high chairs with hearts. Then we had a small machine that churned out knitted snakes. It was so much fun. I listened to music, danced and studied hard. Our dad let us choose the colors we wanted our rooms painted. I earned good grades and graduated high school. I got married and had two children then I joined the Army for about five years. It was the best time of my life. I saved up and used the GI Bill to go to college. I was persistent until I graduated with an AA degree in Science and Secretarial Administrative Support. I've had different ideas of what I wanted to be. I am also working on how to create garments for style, fit and comfort. I go to Bible Study at least two times a week and I walk for exercise. I was in the hospital several times and almost died. I am grateful to be able to do arts and crafts and sell some of what I make. Christmas is coming, my favorite holiday of the year. I love wrapping presents and get in the holiday cheer. I'm looking forward to eggnog and cranberry relish.

IN MY MOMENTS OF SILENCE

I sat as a child on a large leather chair in the little
playhouse in the back yard.
I was quietly relating my whole life.
Quiet believing, I was in a world.
Another being Stronger than us.
I hated my name.
I wanted to be Jennifer.

I thought about the ants fighting over me.
Black one and red ones.
I am happy I am here.
I can change my emotions.
To believe in being positive is to think of happiness,
Joy, enthusiasm.

Christmas time, colored lights and snow.
Decorate trees and windowsills.
Packages under the tree.
The smell of baked goods in the air.
A little pinecone.
A dream.

I'VE BEEN ON SHAKY GROUND

I've been on shaky ground and it's felt like a grand earth
quake we tremble from the jolts and our worry that this
might be the end.

But I believe if
we draw together
we paint together
we sing together
we live and sing
we will beat the danger.

We will live and prosper.
I am glad not to fret.
The earthquake we were led outside.
But is outside safer?
But when the shakes subsided, we all went inside.
We were safe.
Until the next quake.

WHAT TYPES OF PEOPLE BRING OUT THE BEST IN ME?

Self-starters, conservatives.
Extroverts.

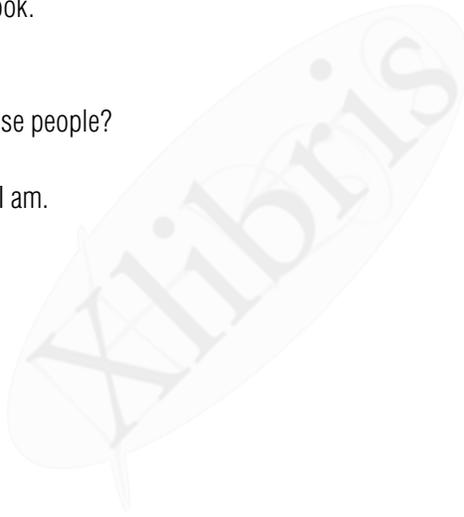
Someone wearing colorful cheerful clothing and smiling.

Rich and a good cook.

Usually, men.

Where do I find these people?

In the place where I am.



THE FERTILE SOIL OF MY HEART

I am a gardener.

I need water.

Plant seeds.

I grow radishes, jalapenos, bell peppers and potatoes

The watermelons wanted to stay with me forever.

We had some corn, lettuce, carrots and cilantro.

I needed mulch and potting soil.

Water and love.

Lots of people enjoyed watching me grow.

I learned to be patient.

I fed the wild birds.

I gave them water.

My heart was full.

THE TASTE OF THE RAINBOW

Reminds me of candy.
Cereal and sugar.
Drinking milk to wash down the cake.
Powdered milk.
Water from the lake
clean and clear
pure as snow.

Snowflakes small, then large
twinkling, sparkling.

The sunset sets gold
and hues of pink and purple.
Sunset and dappling shade trees.

Owls come out of their holes and squirrels
crawl into theirs to sleep.
The owls fight the osprey over a titmouse.

MY BUFFET OF LIFE

In my buffet of life there are rules all of us must follow
before we get to eat.

Wash your hands, wear your mask and try to remain
healthy and calm.

The more that I think of it, the more I desire to do what
is right and to make people happy.

Even your freedom can be replaced but before you know it
you feel normal again, to be free to have a tryst.

Someone to make me happy.

Contact my kids and pray for them.

My grandchild is a genius.

My daughter taught her what she needed to know
before she was visiting me.

My daughter and her child, she played a computer game.

After hands are clean the banquet was spread out for all
to take and enjoy.

The banquet consisted of.

Hors D'oeuvres

Turkey

Hot Dogs

Hamburgers

Shrimp

Sodas

Water

Cakes

Pies, Apple, Pumpkin and Lemon Chiffon

MY LADDER TO THE SKY

My ladder crawls up to my bookshelves.
I gather my need list and find the right books
for my research and information gathering.
I have vertical files and a special case for my
projects and servitude.

I look up at the ceiling through the skylight.
The magician peeked in at me, handed me a
letter which I opened right away, in it was a
note reading . . .
"I know you are struggling.
I'll be here tomorrow.
Bring some fireworks and . . .

I AM A MAP WITH POINTS OF INTEREST

I memorized basic soldier skills.

I wrote by memory on an Air Traffic control map and graduated top of my class.
The teacher checked the gloss of our boots.

There were vending machines there.
And on our breaks, we fed the machines and got our treats, sneaking some treats for later.

The points of interest included the field where we did our jumping jacks that were called side-straddle hops.
We exercised every day, marching and running.
Went to rifle marksmanship on the firing range.

We learned to hone our skills and feel camaraderie with each other.
We did bayonet drills.
To be our best.
Our drill sergeant showed us how to beat our fear.
I saw Diane, and my understanding was, she was poetry and leadership and honor.
I climbed the mountain.

MY UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

I started out Knowing nothing at all.
Small Baby like most everyone else.

I grew into a flower that echoes.

Green grass sprouted out all around me.
The trees that turned from saplings that grew.

The river of my brain right hemisphere, left
hemisphere frontal lobe.
I think in strange bubbles.

Like the Titanic, being too bold life given for
another treasure under the sea.
We arrive on shore.
Grateful to be alive.

Life has unlimited possibilities I plan to
go back to college.

Don't let anything take away from my
needs being met, yet.

Helping others is important.

My desires to accomplish my goals.

Help others including my friends and family.

LIFE IS GOOD BECAUSE

Even though there are ups and downs, my prerogative
is positive.

I have a lot of friends.

I took anger management, and I am lucky.

I don't let the cross words of others get me
down or make me angry.

I just use my "I" sentence and not take the
bait.

Not only have I not raised my voice, I know I
need to be made humble.

My life is good because it is.

THE SPICE OF LIFE

Cinnamon freshens my breath.

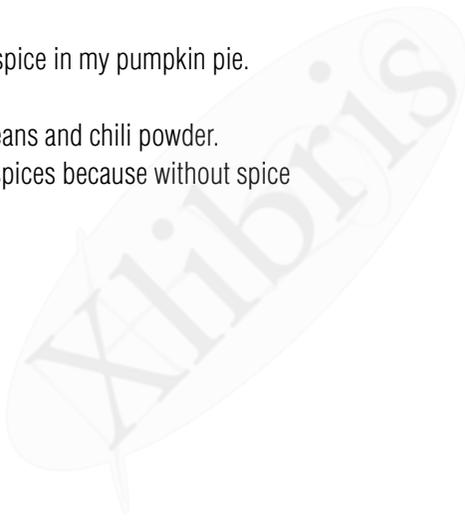
Ginger warms me.

I like the dehydrated kind
with sugar coating that they sell at Trader Joe's.
I like red pepper flakes on my pizza.

I like pumpkin pie spice in my pumpkin pie.

I make chili with beans and chili powder.
I like to cook with spices because without spice
food tastes bland.

Sage
Nutmeg
Aloe Vera
Garlic Powder
Oregano
Chili Powder
Pepper Corn
Ginger
Basil
Bay Leaf



MY SYNCHRONIZED DANCE

Choreography in rhythms music and movement
limber and trust lift myself with you,
my partner, lifting me high, swinging me
around and down.

Twirling like a ballerina.

The backdrop sparkling trees, leaves like gems.
Reminding me of the twelve princesses who go
out to dance and wear out their shoes every night.

The King was frustrated and hired a prince every
night to find out where they went off to.
If the prince was successful, he would live and
if he was not successful, he would be killed.

The third prince refused to drink the drink that the
daughters of the King gave him.

He followed them past the trees with the jewels.

He took the youngest as his bride.

LONELY AS A CLOUD

With no one watching.
Clouds drift apart, and away.

Dancing with the birds.
They swoop in flight.
I bound for joy.

My synchronized life harmony
A fluid pace is composed.

First, I was born, then I went through
childhood, then adulthood.

My synchronized dance.

Chorography in rhythms music and
movement limber and trust

Life is like a rubber band being stretched
have meaning and purpose.

Life is like a UFO.
It's unexplainable.

God as my choreographer.
He is my director.

I am a guest in God's house

MY ARC OF IMAGINATION

My arc's trajectory is wide, and it bends.

Flowing downhill like a waterfall.

Fragrant with the scent of flowers and citrus.

Soft fun like a fluffy cat.

A cat who likes to be vacuumed and play with a feather toy.

The smell of corned beef and cabbage.

Dinner is going to be good.

Playing in the park eating ice cream from the truck.

Volunteering at the library.

Birthday parties with cake cool aid and favors.

Remembering how it was to be young.

Kazoos ball and jacks.

Light reflects.

LESLIE SHEPHERD

Biography – “God and Spirit are Unifying Me”

Recently achieving 6 decades of life, I continue to reaffirm that God has planted seeds of witness and strength throughout my life to grow and change with, and I am eternally thankful. Being creative, resourceful, a willing listener and validator, a peacemaker and a thriver and do-gooder with knowledge, my journey has been impacted in many diverse communities and directions. Focusing on living in the present with what is possible and retainable, through many life phases and growth spurts, giving Spirit and Unity the power to overcome the darkness and decay of life, has been central to the past 30 years of my recovery emphasis and endurance.

At an early age I remember an awareness and sensitivity to the pain and suffering of the world around me and was perceived as such, with the coordinated gift of intelligence and the ability to respond to it positively. From 6th grade to high school graduation, becoming a physician seemed to be the call I felt within me. I was an overachiever in response to the multiple dysfunctional environmental experiences and influences of my birth family of 11 – 13, including my mother’s step - father and mother, who contributed vastly and supportively to my life needs through adulthood. Positive blends of military order and management, hard-working habits and ethics, Catholic faith teachings and the opportunities of the world and its diversity in my education and the community services available to me, with and without many family connections and developed relationships, have been seed plants to the extended, far-reaching breadth of alternative pathways and accepted teachings I have grown to know and love as “God’s divine plan unfolding in me.” Despite the negative and timely downfalls, the gravest with suicidal ideations and experience of going out a second story window and having no recollection of what transpired - from curling up on the Church gift loveseat of my apartment, naked and self-medicated with alcohol to calm the internalized pressure and “voice” motivating me to do what I did not want and did not perfectly know how to stop - to waking up safe in a familiar hospital’s bed with a heparin-lock IV - I have witnessed and grown with success, particularly in the medical field. Other inclusions to this are: I have been in jail a few times for protection

and misdemeanor events; lived homeless in 3 periods and close to it in several; been married, divorced, separated from my children, lost my 1st child in less than a year of age, and been in a few problematic relationships with domestic violence influences; and in and out of State and local hospitals an immeasurable amount of times, in the 3 west coast states, in 30 years of recovery stages of healing and progress with “missing the mark” disabling events. There have been physical strengths that have enabled and sustained me & given me measurable successes and memorable experiences – all planting hope and desire to “rise on the wings of eagles” and be renewed to encounter the world “a new creation” and follow the Spirit and God’s “still small voice” another possible way.

I hope, in my newest state of life, to venture understanding in the Pharmacology realm – medication management and application beyond past experiences in employment, education and life experiences – to make sense of the elemental balance in recovery, working towards advocating the proper measure and accuracy of this force, in coordination with education in Behavioral Studies – and then to promote better recovery, choice, self-determination, hope, & empowerment in an individual’s unique journey, life determinations and outcomes. Working on being a part of healing others, utilizing proactive choices, and round-about, after 30 years of variety in professional medical employment and volunteer service, and seeing “the divine Physician” – God + Christ + Spirit – being the heart and soul, mind and strength of leading the way. Who knows how far I will go? Namaste.

I OWN THIS ROAD I AM ON

I live the integrated phases and changes;
The bountiful harvests of encounter that brace me for
Being momentous and elaborate on uncharted pathways.
Not always flowing perfectly into each other, fluid;
Not always gaining on the plus side – sometimes the inevitable losses
Lead to beginning again, and new world possibilities and Spirit combine-
A possible redemption cycle, with uncertainties and microcosms of hope
Even when I don't know what is happening.
I am invested in this unique relationship and journey...to learn and unfold.
The Spirit and God; they are my focus and are the authorities
With leaders and witnesses abundant to decipher and be molded by.
The world is not a complete judge of what is different and good.
Despite the plentiful seeds and foundations of my youth
I have been a long and patient, social, non-conformist, sometimes outcast.
I learned the Truth and the Way
Through each channel of unplanned events, not always positive.
I have been in jail multiple times for small offenses and
Misaligned to society for standing my ground and needs,
Sometimes being heard...
I have been a listener and an advocate in the Mental Health process and community
realm.
Homeless, penniless, needy and body lamenting
Being part in meaningful understandings and purposeful lives;
Sometimes only with the "Untouchables" I can relate to...and be their sole friend.
Sharing advocacy, support and witness of another VALID WORLD OF MANY.
A population God has not FORGOTTEN.

LIFE IS A ...

Life is a garden, a monumental mass of offerings and choices
Yielding a cornucopia of blessings and gifts
To partake in and create a completed Lifetime from
Some Spiritualists view God as the grand gardener
But to me the gardener is only a facilitator
I perceive God as elemental, central, all evolving
To all Forces, Forms and Encounters
He is Presence, Spirit, Grace, and Life itself
Needed for abundant, Life-giving crops and outcomes
That feed and nourish, remedy health to
All that might encounter its benevolence and delight
Reoccurring in its diligent detailed workings of regeneration of the generations
Recyclable Seeds to sew, varieties innumerable like Stars in the Constellations
Prepared enriched and plentiful Soil, measured to give its Universe a Home
And a foundation of sustenance and stability
Daily drinks of water – whether by nature and rain drops or human nurture and water
hose
Replenishment and Revitalization Renews
The depletion of its constant growth and activity with toiling and its surroundings
And brings bountiful color, texture, flavor, fragrance
Unified in bursts of packaged life interpretations and
Physical shapes, multifaceted and multidimensional
Creating realms of joyful exposure and utility
That are a mainstay event in all individual's journeys.

MASQUERADING THROUGH LIFE – A MISTAKEN IDENTITY

I don't know this role.

Pretending to be something that I am not.

Being responded to and treated

Like I am someone or something else, a lie

Truth and Witness, Discovery, and Creation

Walk hand in hand in me

I dedicate and impassions my works

Toward sincerity, being present, staying open

To learning, change, and accepting difference

That catalyzes fullness, growth, recovery and newness

I have never been interested in

The Mardi Gras celebration

In New Orleans, Louisiana

It is scary, has harmful potential and unpredictable

People celebrate it annually

It is a charted, planned activity

That enhances participant's lives

Sometimes I wonder what it would be like

To be on the other side

Engaging in the parade, unidentifiable

Not anchored, suspended in

Free flow action and spontaneity

Letting nature take its course

MY ARC'S TRAJECTORY

Expansive and ever-renewing
Full of vivid and energized details and experiences
Reaching beyond the endless horizon
To mold a new frame and undocumented structure
Unifying but leaving open space and an
Unclosed room for new, regenerative seeds for growth
For uniqueness and individual responsibility
In the unpredictable and uncontrollable
Destinies and days we encounter frequently
Throughout life's duties of Grace and Glory
Only God's wisdom and presence, Spirit, siren
Can determine and offer change and completion

“ONCE” -HALF DOME 1989

Holding the cable
The force securing me for the ascent
Connecting me from the steps of
The accomplishable trails traveled to the climb; my second attempt
My zenith – high point destiny, on the edge
Required courage
No fear of heights controlling me
Physical strength, conditioning and stamina
Supported it
But my Spirit to achieve
 The will to want/desire something phenomenal
 And the mind, motivation, and empowerment
 To overcome the thoughts and weaknesses
 And the devastating possibilities
 If I made 1 wrong move
Stabilized for about 30 seconds to a minute, encountering 100 feet of movement
I placed my hands on the cable
 Steadily, Confidently, Powerfully
 Took Charge, as I streamlined upwards
 Without fault or adversity
Scaling the flat granite wall
So small an event in life, yielding a massive, inclusive, panoramic view
Of what was beyond
In reach of the eye and mind
To hope for a possibility and a future

SOMETHING FOR CHANGE

deals work progress and change
But in a momentous impulse
Recovery can be shattered and squandered
Approaching and focusing
On daily routines, encounters with consistency
And working commitment
Sets the stage and pace
For new journey skills and outcomes
Productive and returning
One impactive event of a dissolution
To many successive, successful
Phases of accomplishment, like petals of a rose, unfolding
Comfort, satisfaction
And an open door
To methods, theories, strategies, and treatment
Making way to wholeness and completeness
Unity in community, universally reaching
Connecting, socially acceptable
Productive with progress
Promoting oneness
Engaging and Present
Taking in the Joy and Good
Being worthy in all efforts
Making good with God

SOUL SHINE

Atmosphere and elements, a force
In a confined chamber, building and growing
Expanding to a fluid aura
That reacts beyond boundaries
Composed of years of trial and error
Planning and successes, some failures
Human traits fallible, “missing the mark” and “missed steps”
Allowing for the “misses” in life
The encounters that yield emptiness and loss
Comprehensive force, unified strength
Of sharing, giving, grace and knowledge
Brightness, enthusiasm, support, encouragement
Candidness, collectiveness, caution at times
Precluding action
A response to absorbing
The infections spread
Of illumination, peace, contentment
Chiaroscuro and opulence
With meaning, purpose, hope, development
All-inclusive, ever evolving
A continuation of life abounding
Regenerating the
Eternal

THE WIND IN MY FACE.....

GUSTY, BLUSTERY –
EXUBERANT AIRFLOW
BREEZE NOT....NOTHING SLOW AND GENTLE ABOUT IT
THE VORACIOUS MOVEMENT
OF THE ATMOSPHERE
TAKES MY BREATH AWAY
CAPTURES MY STATIONARY, STATIC BODY
AND ENVELOPES THE PREPARING FORM
PUSHING IT FORWARD AND BACKWARD
WITH ALL THE FERVOR OF DETERMINATION
THE FORCE IN MY FACE
LET'S ME KNOW NATURE
IS A FORCE NOT TO BE RECKONED WITH
MY HAIR, WHISPY AND TANGLED, FLYING HITHER-TITHER
MY EYES WATERING AND BLINKING
MY EARS HEAR THE AIR CURRENT WHISTLE
MY CHEEKS BRACE AGAINST ITS PUMMELLING PRESSURE

AND I FIND REFUGE...BEHIND A WALL...FOR A REPLENISHING STRENGTH AND A
MIRACLE MOMENT...TO ENCOUNTER THE LENGTH OF ITS ENDURING POWER
AND MIGHT.....AGAIN

A SIGNIFICANT DOWNLOAD IN MY LIFE

Relapse brings memories
of New Beginnings

2013...March...thru September 2016

A new Mental Health Agency.

A new home...same state...new city.

New opportunities and program hopes.

For better, longer recovery.

Day by day, at first, bringing back the good.

And healthy choices and committing to discipline.

Joining groups and making a goal-

Peer Support Specialist – a class offering opening to discovery.

My strengths and weaknesses and how to apply
the intervention of Cognitive and Behavioral Therapies.

And Meditation and past yoga helped boost the outcomes.

Resource development – Where I needed to improve
and advance.

And use my skills and accomplishments helping others
with mental illness.

Peer Seminar, after classes and State Program
lead to Advocacy with the Washington Warmline.

Volunteering first, getting my groundings
for future employment in the opening job market for Peers.

Help with the Agency and State Department Programs
lead to Resume and Employment

At the Hospital I had been treated at 3 times.

But for an organization open to alternatives
and new approaches to Mental Health Recovery.

An opportunity to practice Advocacy for
Choice and options and freedom and
unique and personal, self-determined, hope.

And a future with longevity of recovery.
A lot of applicable education, flourishing.
Developments and increased networking
Participated in Community and time spent
on personal goals with health, fitness and Spirituality.
Recovered driving skills, license and
finally, a car, Toyota Rav4, mobility and timing improve;
budgeting insurance, banking, medical, personal needs, food
and a home.

Then the element of aggression entered the workplace.
Conflict, destruction, anger, harm erupted/evolved.
I was not immune to its forceful merging and immersion
with devastating outcomes.
My son had come to live with me in Washington
the last 6 months of 2016.
His own recovery faltered and added to
the wavering management of
my own recovery.
My recovery resources and skills and practices
were not enough, mature with wisdom to counter
the course of chemical imbalance.
My brain and body responded with to this blight.
Psychosis and dysfunction returned
and all the empowerment, regenerativity, resiliency and 100% gain
was lost, its reward distributed
To other's journeys and lives; Starting over again, Jan 2017.

THE ULTIMATE TRUTH CAME TO ME WHEN

In a series of epiphanies in 200-2001.

I experienced breakdown and transformation
And broke free of the chains that were disabling
me in CA after 40 years of life. I likened it to
40 years in the desert in the Bible.

However, there were
many abundant years and progress in self-actualization.
So I, later, recanted that belief.
The last 3 years before I left CA and my old life,
I was guided and called towards
a new church, reading the Bible, being in fellowship and family.

Different, and to explore more natural treatment and response
to my psychiatric condition, which yielded
psychosis in 2000-2001, before I took flight
to new places for discovery and healing,
employment and direction.

Those 3 years fueled me
with confidence in a relationship with God/Christ
to do anything that was possible.

WHAT IS MY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE?

Everything I have self-actualized and matured to in my 59 years focuses me to a few statements:

“Love your neighbor as yourself; Love your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength.”

Each individual is one unique journey in relationship with/to God, even if they don't believe in an all(omni)-powerful, knowing, everywhere present and giving, loving Higher Power managing all of life and the universe.

When in the present and operating there is a discipline I try to master daily in focus and goal, everything counts and listening to the Spirit/God is a guide to response and attention. I like planning and goal setting, but the present truths are what I walk with when I make decisions about my priorities and efforts and activities. Understanding and listening to others stories/journeys is important, as it is to be heard about mine. Remembering my various unique weaknesses and needs and needing acceptance for being a work in progress is something I offer to others as well.

Remembering God in it all and love (and meditating daily to work through my inequities) as the substance and goal to operate around, is vital and productive; knowing each individual is special in God's eyes, needs to be observed by myself at all costs.

Accountability, in prayer and meditation, with God's presence, keeps me on track with and after my failings. Respect, Honor, Thanksgiving, Hope, Joy, Peace and Rejuvenation/Regenerativity is all possible with this philosophy and gearing.

It is given back to me 10-fold, and I believe it is the way.

NOTE: BEING AN AGENT OF CHANGE IN THE WORLD

THE TRAILS OF MY HIKES

Reaching for the zenith . . . the apex of a life
well lived and focused on the greater good of all (utilitarian)
is timed and splattered.
With many journeys of walks, undefined and incomplete.
Many trails are continuous experiences,
with some completions, focusing on compassion, discipline, justice;
leaving me joy-filled, energized, strengthened and peaceful,
Fluid for the next stage and hiking history I've mastered.

Encounters on the way.
With nature, nurture, well-being and some sacrifice.
Open the pathway
to the great height needed to be climbed.
Exhilaration stamina in patience and waiting.
Contour the daily efforts of fruit and acceptance.
Of boundaries and limits.

I continue to increase and further/widen.
Experiencing death and decline, in several stages
is real on the way.
But resurrection and renewal
are the sweet reward to savor and keep.
Spirit glides, walks assertively.
Each new event and stage greeted with
openness and resolution.

To a destiny God is the author of.

MY STEEL TOE BOOT

How firm a foundation
and safety prevail.
My steel toe boot.
Nothing will avail!
How strong and supportive.
How formed and complete.
Every time I'm walking
I'm secure upon my feet.
They glide lightly and soundly
take me anywhere with ease.

The stories they could tell
The wandering and the daily toil and tease.
The flights and suspensions
they are as necessary as a car's oil.

I depend upon the might and life
of this pair of useful armor.
Nothing can take its place-it can be used even by a farmer.

Weathered and faithful in service.
Aligned in routine and the unique surprises.
It contributes to the body's totality, and
gives grace as the sun arises.

Its history is unending.
Its paths are yet untold.

The possibilities are endless.

Its days of joy and sorrow may unfold
EVERMORE

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS GIVE YOU THE MOST PRIDE

“**P**ride cometh before a fall” is in the Bible-I try to rephrase it as “gain confidence and assertion in life and am thankful for.” The list is several. . .

- 1) 31 years of non-linear recovery with success at individual normalcy.
- 2) 30 years of running/10 years of walking; returning now to running balance with walking; did San Francisco Marathon 1996 (35yrs), many fund raisers, walks, runs, climbs, hikes.
- 3) Over 30 years in medical profession (out of 43-since 16yrs of age).
- 4) Several hats of developments in education, employment, personal accomplishments: Counselor, Volunteer, Hostess, Waitress, Babysitter, Artist, Housekeeper, Seamstress, Teacher's Aide, Messenger, Service Aide, Unit Secretary, Clinical Assistant, Job Coach, Insurance Claims Processor, Nursery Attendant, Gardener, Nursery Volunteer, Administrative/Clinical Medical Assistant, Hospitality Chairperson, Office Manager, Computer Lab Assistant, Grocery Retail Clerk/Associate-Courtesy & Customer Service, Crisis Clinic/Warmline Peer Support Specialist & Mental Health Phone Advocate-Team Lead & Administrative Peer Support Specialist, Sunday School Teacher, Girl Athlete of the Year 6 years in a row, President and other club/group offices, Coach, Athlete, Church Member, Diaconate lead/member, Student, Daughter, Niece, Granddaughter, Great Granddaughter, Great Grandniece, Sister, Wife, Mother, Aunt, Great Aunt, Great-Great Aunt, Girlfriend, Significant other, Partner, Friend, Alternative Family Member, Unique Individual, Group Participant, Staff Substitute. . .there are probably more.
- 5) Finishing 16th/601 students in graduating high school class 1979 OHS.
- 6) Getting my AA in Liberal Arts from Santa Ana College/Rancho Santiago College (with classes from Chapman University, 2 years)

- 7) Sewing many of my own clothes; crocheting my children their baby blankets; latch-hooking many rugs/pillows.
- 8) Being an accomplished and varied reader.
- 9) Becoming Technology/Computer Savvy and Applying it to work.
- 10) Being part of raising 3 children.
- 11) Having a good relationship with God/being faithful and lifelong commitment to discovery/growth.
- 12) Finally achieving an "Absolute" list to live by.
- 13) Being able to be abased and abound.
- 14) Being able to live in the present.
- 15) Being clean, organized, and focused on good habits and outcomes.
- 16) Being able to listen well and often.
- 17) Being open and flexible.
- 18) Having the ability to be magically inclined.
- 19) Having higher thinking capabilities.
- 20) Accepting people/God in the relationship that exists, where it is at.

There might be more but spending an hour in therapy management (Book "Positive Addiction").

These reminders give me confidence in self-worth and the possibilities to manage anything I meet in life.

Discover the ways to health and continuance.

Add to the works of longevity.

Create a journey that is vast and boundless.

Walk with acceptance and desire.

Rise to options and opportunities daily.

Listen with contentment to the air.

Dream of beauty, nature and possibility.

Enter the Gate to Heaven.

FREEDOM AND CELEBRATION

Let Loose the boundaries and bindings.
Let Make Way for the parade of joyful celebration!
Open Doors wide.
Expand the entire horizon.
Go the Distance with choice and expression.
Commit to the gift of connecting positively.
Grab the undaunting flow of energy.
Give Opportunity to the seeds of change.
Grow the Community and Family.
Bring Life to the withering and waning.
Be Gracious with others' journeys.
Set Sail on a tidal wave of smiles.
Contract with God for Love.
Offer Yourself in an unconditional nature.
Anticipate the generous and unexpected.
Align with Others in world unity and peace.
Embark Upon new endeavors.
Give Voice to the oppressed and vulnerable.
Discover the ways to health and continuance.
Add to the works of longevity.
Create a journey that is vast and boundless.
Walk with acceptance and desire.
Rise to options and opportunities daily.
Listen with contentment to the air.
Dream of beauty, nature and possibility.
Let In the ways of Peace and Unity.
Enter the Gate to Heaven.

EMPTY MEDICINE OF HOPE - SURRENDER

Surrender...letting go...Meditating...focusing on nothing,
and emptying the thoughts and places of our lives.
Evolving to a space of nothingness but unified connectedness.
New Beginnings.
Possibilities and Empowerment.

Creation and Re-creation, Generativity and Re-generativity
Simpleness and complexity streaming together
to make a unifying force and connection to all.
Hope is Light, eternal.
Immeasurable and endless.
Undaunted, unfettered, ever reaching...
The cure...the treatment and direction and guide –

At the brink, the separation, the divide...
Beginning and end,
wrapped up altogether
tightly packed and stored in pockets.

In the frequencies and waves of the air.
Flowing and yet non-existent,
suspended, ready to burst and spring forth
with the claim to healing and peace.

IT'S MYSTERIOUS TO ME

How the universe began.
I have learned from many sources
to think wisely in the end.

The option of God, all powerful and all knowing
is a matter of faith and not questioning;
and I have not settled on this answer.

But its strength and peace are ever lasting.

The discoveries of science promote
curiosity and understanding.
They paint a history and evolving,
in all its dimensions and its demanding.
The mind expands in knowledge

Of what is unearthed, disclosed and proven.
Accepting the timeline goes on indefinitely
with many facts and lives inter-woven.
Spirit tells me to "hush";

Not to trouble the story tellers and their ways.
To not take vigil on conclusion
To let some pieces, hang in the haze.

To keep the door open.
To wonder at yet is untold.
'Tis youthful and like a fountain
Flowing continuously and always bold.

The expansiveness of the worlds we know.
Overflow the boundaries of the mind
and channel, network and unite.

All creation



MY LUGGAGE (IN THE PAST)

Being homeless on occasion
I have learned to travel light.
To not be caught up in ownership
or possessions that steal the night.
Just my personal information
that government and society accept.
A book or two, some writing materials

A couple changes of clothing,
LOTS OF SOCKS, UNDER CLOTHS and a jacket.
Concisely fitting in its holder.
Not difficult to pack it.
Neat, organized and orderly;
kept clean and tidy, ready to use.

Lots of memories I hold on my inner basket.
Something to ponder and muse.
Periodically, as I travel through life,
few things are added and exchanged.

Just moments that enhance The Spirit/Soul.
Nothing that will make me feel deranged.
This management is safe and secure
and has led me far and wide.
It keeps me on the road to my journey
and ready to respond to any new tide.

I have pondered settling down
taking responsibility toward deepening the load.
Change in life must be more stable

so, I will not be taken by the “under toad.”
When that day arrives
I will take it as it comes.
Be present, mindful and in unity with peace, bound;
never worrying about its totality and sums.

I and God are friends
and His approval follows my path and ways.

Faithful and everlasting
it will amount to many days.

When it comes time to leave my luggage
for someone else to bear
the grief and consternation
will be something that person can wear.
I will not have sorrows in parting.
The weight was always easy
no trauma, conflicts, or bonding
to make me feel queasy.

Understanding life on simple terms
is a way I have come to know.
My days are filled with joys and sorrows
and, so, my trails will go.

I have left my mark on earth.
The mystery of beyond death
I will wait for new rebirth.

MY MOSAIC LIFE

Years of accumulation
of many color-filled seeds of contemplation and accomplishment.
Meadow green to start the flourishing, Forest Green and merging Emerald
of education, rules, and ways of being...
Accepted and Productive,
contributing to life and other's journeys.
In cooperation and fulfillment.
Full of study, discussion, sharing and writing.
Thoughtfulness and understanding, in times alone.
Vivacious and alluring, some moments in darkness
and flailing.
Ever-present and never-ending.
A wheel of continued movement and pacing.
Bright, both absorbing and reflective, Liberating Yellow follows,
Canary, Lemon, Chiffon are an atmosphere of glowing twinkles.

Family, friends, and relationships of networks
And connections...pierced together.
A chart and matrix, multi-faceted, talented and gifted;
Journeys, winding and meshing actively, finding leveling...
Both Securely and Randomly.
Planned precisely and all-including.
Bursts of Flaming, Fragrant Orange to awaken the dead.
Many forces intricately molding and shaping,
framing to fit its Godly placement
or Effervescent Pinks and Reds, next
A river bubbling, trickling, swelling and waning.
For all the emotions and expressions numbered and known.
Joy, peace, turmoil, chaos, anger-
Withering breath of life on air and

encounters renewed with unsurpassable strength and poise;
harmony unlimited, resolution complete and with trails of hope.
Torrential, passionate waves to embattlement and rage.
White pauses for Invincibility and Restraint, awaiting atmospheres and bubbles of
space.
Blue cascades of phases and stages;
Periwinkle, ocean, midnight and sky-
Depth and flow, power, bathing the stretches.
Feathery lightness of passings and lulls.
Staunch and Earthy Browns and Beiges
Tan, Sand, Barkwood, Sawdust and Cocoa
Framing and structuring, yet allowing hollow places
While allowing fluidity and mobility to span and immersion,
Forming journey and placement in the moment.
Purple-Character and Spirit,
Wisdom, Experience; a foothold to ideals...
The space of self-actualized accomplishment and intellect...
The steady stream of nurture, nature, and healing.
Metals of Glory are the last call, liquid and solid
Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron, Bronze-
Flashing rods of empirical mainstays.
My bones, my flesh, my organs and systems
Intrinsic, Integrated, yet fallible and flexing
Only Black, as the night
Is Absent
Negating, ashen, and dead. Grey days.
"No room in the Inn" is its lonely calling. "World Without End. Amen"

THIS IS WHAT PROSPERITY MEANS TO ME

I have been through several collapses and restarts from relapse in my 59 years, mostly in the last 31 years. I have had times of abasement; learning to live without all the extras (needs, wants, desires) and necessities the mainstream world lives for and relies upon. I survived and even thrived in ways I felt prosperous and whole. I took time and care with things like Spirituality, Health, Education, Multiple Communities, Personal Pleasures/Alternative Choices, understanding the psychological elements and applying them in stages I was ready for, different employment and volunteer works, managing mitered-down finances and balances that kept me stable and efficient, and just learning to “be” in a space, with nothing and nothing happening...just listening and having minimal response to the world around me.

Having “fullness” is prosperity to me. Gifts and talents, regardless of financial inclusion, fill my life and contribute to a sound and reliable future, self-actualized and functioning where I belong when I belong there. Planning is acceptable, but “being” and “flowing,” with the grace of God and “all things are possible” attitude gives way to abundance and activity and growth, no matter the complications.

If I were to choose one experience that describes my success at “just flowing” it would be my surrender to God in 2001 to become a “disciple.” Abandonment of some ways has given loss to baggage that was keeping me from success in many efforts and lost meaning and purpose. Claiming new life and reclaiming the aspects of my past has opened up opportunities to grow and change and be more flexible in the ever-present evolution of life in general. Coping and psychological recovery with psychiatric and neurological intervention and management, has yielded me new ways of processing and solving life from seeds planted, in my foundational youth and young adulthood. In becoming a disciple, learning and advocating and teaching new ways of discovery, life pursuits and experiences, and knowing one’s self well and defined to respond to any situation life deals one is effective and ministerial. I experience prosperity through all this life changing, relapse and recovery phases included, no matter the financial gain or loss. Having a life with vision, meaning and purpose makes prosperity a refreshing label of my life and its accomplishments.

DAYNE HAMMOND

I have been painting all my life and have discovered that my work reflects my discerning, unique view of humankind in all of its diversity and forms. I believe that my pieces reveal elements of cultural and social truths, including the irony of life. I strive to create thought provoking work that invites the viewer to reflect and question how their conditioned, and perhaps counterproductive ideas sustain their biased views of reality. I would describe my artistic style as a blend of surrealism and abstract expressionism.

The existential theme that pervades my art and poetry is that human beings are condemned to freedom and choice; and the anguish and anxiety that emerges from this realization. Thus, powerful, vivid emotions are evident in my work. My poetic style is free verse, narrative and magical realism. It speaks to the mind of a person who feels and perceives in my art images depicting anguished, facial expressions and confusion. These images portray the suffering of individuals living with incurable, inescapable symptoms of mental illness and addiction. My work is inspired by the painter Jean Michel Basquiat and writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

I have been painting since the age of seven and began writing in elementary school. A poem I wrote about 911 was published in a book when I was in fifth grade. I took three private painting lessons with a retired art teacher who taught me the basics of color theory.

OBSERVATIONS

The eddy of the well swirls within.
The spider, tied to its web is haunting the threshold.
The alligator, a deep, scaly green catches his prey, spewing rubies into the air.
The Chinese merchant stows away change for his daughter's allowance.
The pitiful drunk pisses on a stoop near a hotel lobby.
Oil sizzles and bubbles as frozen fries enter the cauldron.
A mystical sage, atop his hilltop cave bares his body to the moon at night.
A death row inmate sheds a tear as he approaches the electric chair.
A baby is born into the arms of a woman who barely loves herself.
A book is burned for telling a story too true.
My mother kisses my forehead in between sips of her wine.
Music plays in the glowing room of two teenage lovers.
The scent of engine smoke is smelled by diners on the canal.
A women's red heel gets caught in a crack on a Grecian veranda.
A leaf grows heavy under the weight of thunderous rain drops.
A swan tucks her head into white feathers as she grows tired.
The Latin family gather around in a small room crowded with candles as their matriarch slips away.
God kisses the cheek of Jesus in their Heavenly home as night falls over North America.
Morning light dances upon the ridges of Tibet as the red-sheathed monks eat breakfast.
Life ends,
never for a second to the eyes of the great observers.

A GREEN RIVER

A green river is a place to rest your head beside and dream of endless skies covering the plains and plantations and dense, scattered trees of a nearby town who clings to life on the dirty fingers of men fastening things together and tearing things apart.

A green river runs under the covered bridge where children play and throw pennies from, wishing that their neighbor's son would fall deeply in love with them or dreaming of a baseball caught in Yankee stadium followed by their crowd's tremendous roars. Children who one day look at their reflections and see a child, only stretched and broadened with the hurried static of someone who is wanted somewhere far beyond the town and have nearly forgotten of their penny-bridge dreams.

A green river watches the people of this town and bends near it at times to be close the moments when humans hold each other, keep their promises, or tell the truth, even when it hurts. However, sometimes the river slinks away when the voices of these creatures are used against one another and cause their human eyes to shed river of their own.

See, rivers have eyes too, when little toes are dipped in its waters for the first time or a penny full of wishes hits its surface, the river sees.

A green river is a friend to people and never sleeps, only slows in parts.

A green river touches us as we touch it and carries our lives into the sea.

YESTERDAY

Oh the wrath of nature
how I wait for the injection
to make me real
because I am not counted by you
unless I function and smile and wave.

I was locked away yesterday
among my fellow lost friends
in a monster's cage
no color to remind me of the sunshine
or of an ocean's wave
no view to remind me that I do exist outside those walls

Upon release I wondered why
I am treated as a foreigner
in a place of healing

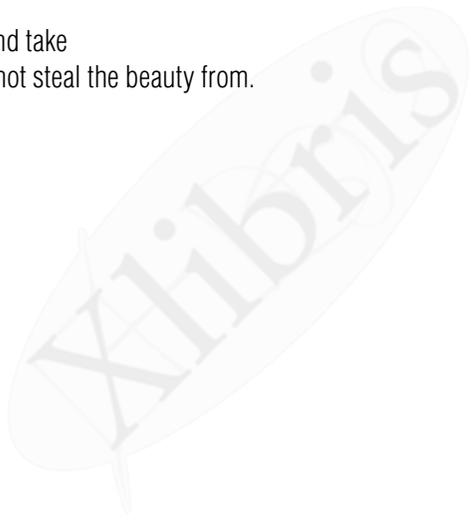
Am I really so frightening
without my oval-shaped friends
that my dreams attack me at night
to remind me that I am broken without them.

I am a Jekyll and Hyde
who wishes to be Dayne
in the years of his youth;
flowing with his emotions
and chasing flighty dreams
rather than a controlled machine
run by many men
oiled and inspected
to ensure upkeep

How will I escape my making?
I can pray to my creator
that I be undone and done again.
But I don't want to live again.

I pray that I hold fast in this life
and hold Earth in my hands
and remember that even the Earth
orbits the Sun

And maybe, just maybe
I will flow again
with my oval friends or not
and include them
into a life of give and take
that injections cannot steal the beauty from.



THE WINDS OF THE WEST

The winds of the west appeared in North America and playfully rambled through a small town.

The winds of the west blew in a direction which caused the trees to shed their leaves and scatter them throughout the streets.

The winds of the west picked up a letter which fell from the pocket of a lay man on the way to his lover's house.

The winds of the west tussled a woman's red hair as she held the hand of her ginger-haired toddler while walking through the park.

The winds of the west pulled the young man's shirt out of his trousers as he sat in the grass next to his pretty, young love.

The winds of the west guided the hand of an elderly woman as she made her way across the sleepy avenue.

The winds of the west drew a man down an alley that he had never discovered, where he learned of a new culture-imbued bookstore.

The winds of the west stirred up the spirit in wanderers down the boulevard causing them to greet their passersbys with a jovial grin.

The winds of the west sent the aromas from a morning-time cafe uptown and caused a grumbling in a young man's stomach who was on his way to work.

The winds of the west caused a chill on the neck of a dark eyed brunette causing her to turn her collar up.

The winds of the west perked up the residents of a local town and aroused change in them.

The sleepless winds of the west turned the Earth on its axis where they stirred up trouble in this North American town until it was time for them to saunter on somewhere far away, in another part of the world.

The witches of Salem gathered together for a final time before they would be sought out by the townspeople. They danced around a mound of cinders and pine and sang their forlorn songs of lost lives, disappointment and the end to an age of sisterhood and mothering.

See, these women, grew up in the town near the woods, but never felt as if they belonged to that tribe. That every day ness of waking, cooking, cleaning, attending to their husbands and children before falling asleep and closing their eyes to reveal a darkness beneath their lids more beautiful than the day to day motions of the grayness of town life. They yearned for the trees to speak to them and the dirt to be like a second skin to them with twigs and flowers budding out of their hair and their songs would cry out to the gods of the east and west with hopes of bringing rain and joy and alive-ness. They were alive.

These outcasts and children of the wild. These beautiful children who became pregnant with spices and travels to other clans where they would hold the dirty hands of one another and kiss the lips of their sisters and bathe in the cold rivers with them and produce a fruit to be shared at their makeshift table. Beautiful rain WOULD come for these girls and wash them clean and joy WOULD come to these children who exalted the world as it was, wild and enchanted and full of whispers only to be heard by the ones who pressed their ears to the wood.

Their days were glorious holding each other hand in hand, before the world of men surrounded them and cast them into the flame for being too beautiful, and they did burn, they did burn bright. Iridescent green and blue burst forth from the flames as their bodies disappeared and the flames covered their smiling faces. They smiled for they once ran side by side with the secret, the secret that only the natives know and that I myself am seeking to find. Their ashes fed the earth and were swept away by the rains into the rivers which led into oceans and graced the lips of dolphins and whales and before they knew it, these girls and women were across the world touching the shores of China or Europe and the wild women from these foreign lands dipped their hands into the rivers and tasted of the most delicious water they had ever tasted, and they were set free.

BEDROOM MUSINGS

The death of someone ironically brings more meaning to your life: Suddenly that ring they gave to you long ago has a story, or that pin or that pair of shoes. That ring pops out of your drawer and does a sultry roll over your knuckles until it slides into place on your finger; that pin floats from atop your dresser through the air shaking its little tail-feathers before placing itself delicately upon your lapel; and those shoes spring to life and dance around the room before cuddling up next to your feet. These items before, were just that-random items, but now they tell a story about the ones that they too graced and loved, and now pass on that love to you.

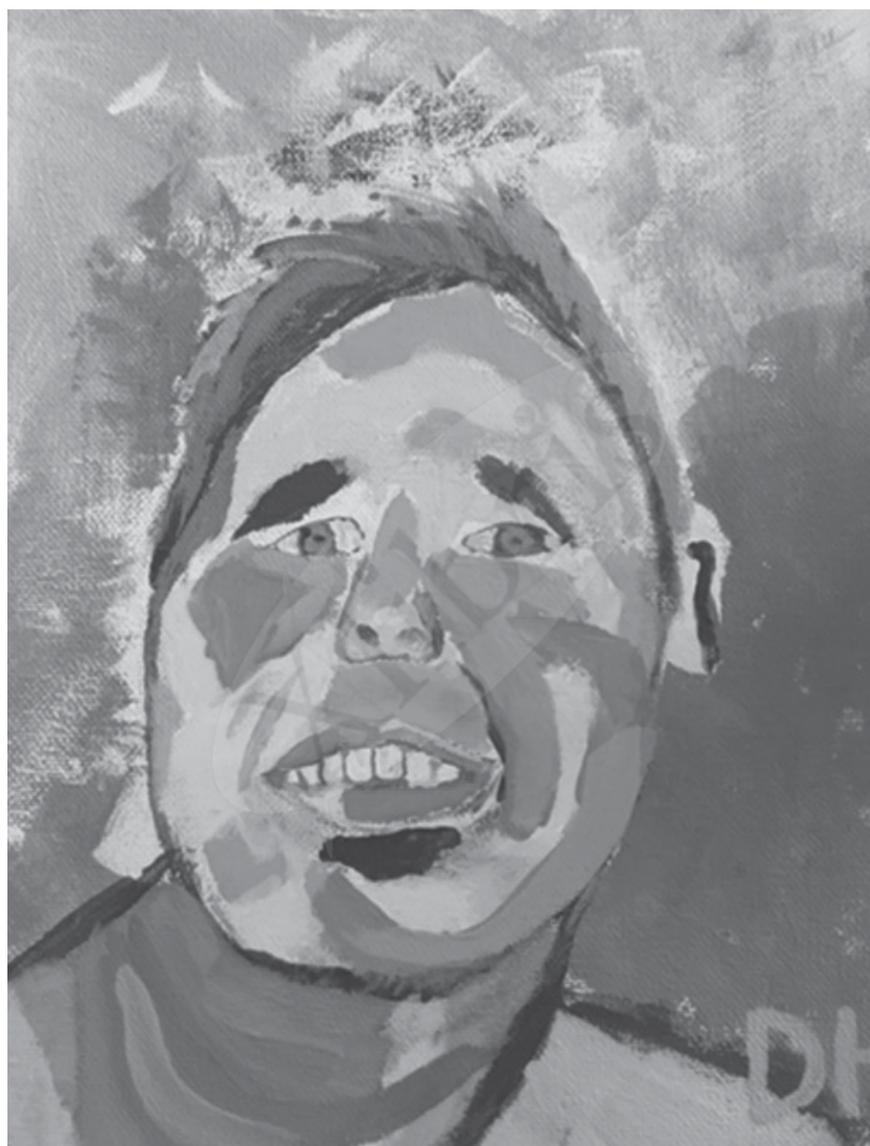




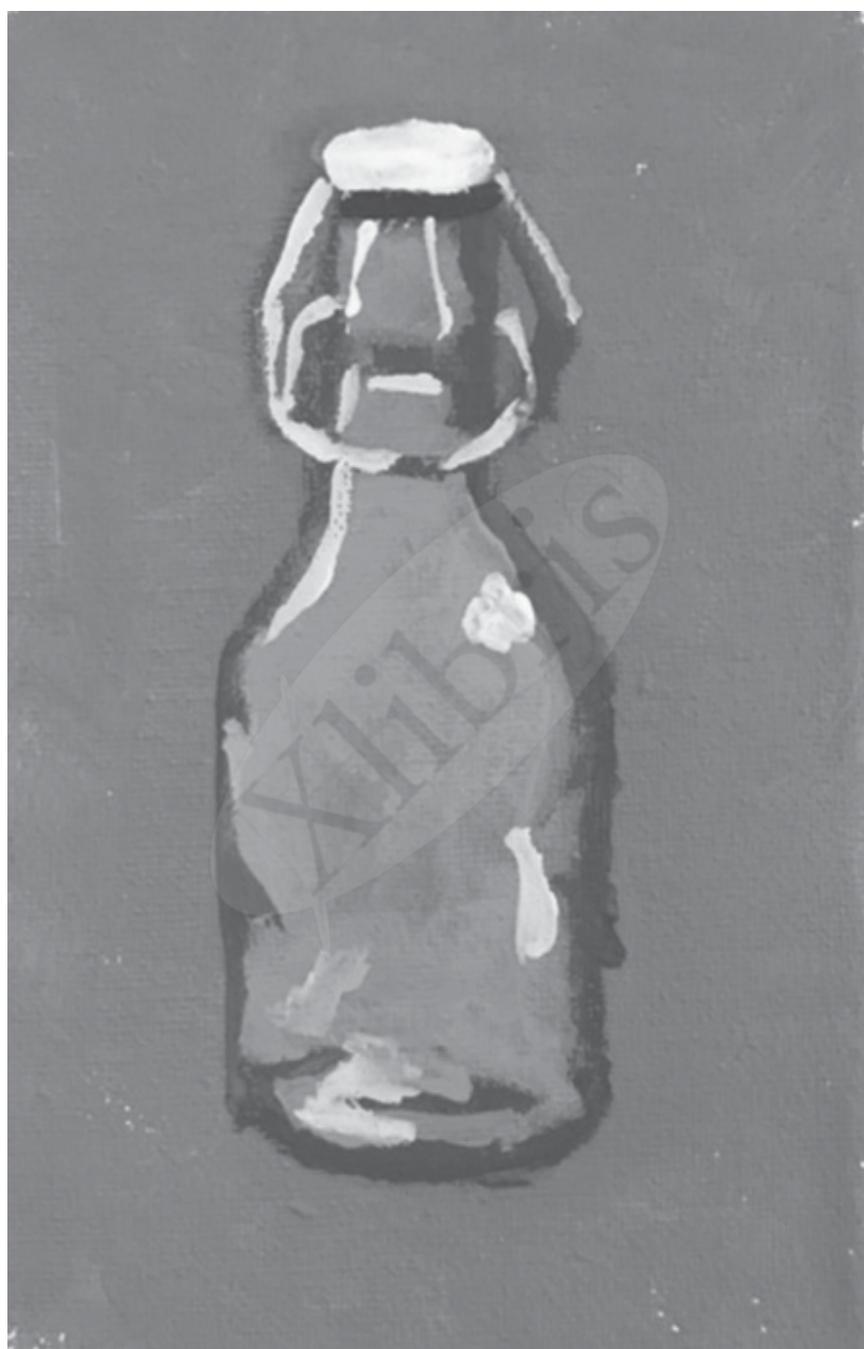








































PAUL MARION FERREL

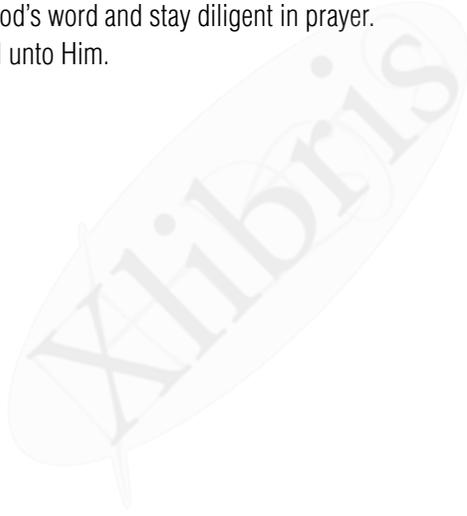
I was born in sunny, Long Beach California in 1958 to a loving family. In 1966 my father passed away and I was left to fend for myself and my two sisters. My mother had to make a living for the family so she started a medical transcription business. I lacked a father model so my mother sent me to the Cub Scouts but they didn't accept me because I didn't have a father. So I went to the Boys Club and I enjoyed myself and performed better at school. As the years went by I worked hard at many jobs and I finally decided to serve the Lord so I joined the Los Angeles Dream Center. I worked as a house parent for the discipleship program and then reached an impasse. I felt I wasn't growing and spoke to my supervisor and they transferred me to the development and fund-raising office where I flourished and my life improved. A donor then funded my Bible College education at Angeles Bible Institute where I graduated at the top of my class because I was very passionate. After 18 years at the Dream Center I had a life threatening illness that caused me to fall into a depression and a psychologist sent me to a crisis center before coming to Founders House of Hope. I've been at Founders House of Hope for four and a half years and I'm happy at Founders. At this time, I've discovered a renewed meaning and purpose in my life. I also enjoy volunteering at my Church and I facilitate a Bible Study class at Founders.

MONEY

It can buy a house,
but not a home.
It can buy a bed,
but not sleep.
It can buy a clock,
but not time.
It can buy you a book,
but not knowledge.
It can buy you a position,
but not respect.
It can buy you medicine,
but not health.
It can buy blood,
but not life.
It can buy sex, but not love.
So you see, money isn't everything.
And it often causes pain and suffering.
I tell you all this because I am your friend.
I am your friend and as your friend,
I want to take away your pain and suffering.
So send me all your money and I will suffer for you.
Cash only please.

PRAYER IS THE KEY

Why does it seem we often give in to temptation that comes our way?
It is often so hard to say no to the flesh.
Though we try, we forget to pray.
For this is the key to unlock the door.
To overcoming temptation and sin.
We must keep in God's word and stay diligent in prayer.
And remain faithful unto Him.



MORNING PRAYER

In the name of Jesus.

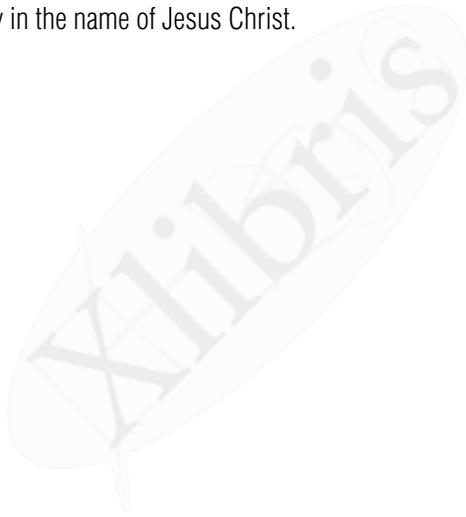
Thank you for loving me, for walking with me and for caring about the smallest details my life.

Fill me with grace Lord, that I may have the strength to face what is before me today.

I know not what today will bring forth but make me ready Lord for whatever it may be.

Have a blessed day in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.



GODLY POEM

You never promised us a perfect life but only a perfect love.
We seek you in prayer and look for you as you are.
Our everlasting savior, a bright and shining star.
Sometimes we are out there lost, seeking your acceptance.
But we know that your will for us will never be rejections.
Because we believe what the Lord has done for us completely.
His word is our life and his life is ours so sweetly.
We may struggle to make it each and every day.
But he put it in our hearts and he shows us the way.
Our faith grows as our lives get more involved.
One small voice to guide us with issues you will solve.

A PRAYER FOR OUR WORLD

God, you alone are worthy of honor and glory and praise.

With you, we can overcome every storm including the global impact Covid 19 is having on our world.

Right now we are asking you to:

Heal those who are sick and protect those who are not.

Give our leaders extra wisdom as they navigate this pandemic and economic uncertainty.

Strengthen Your global Church, reveal to us how we can partner together to reach the needs of those around us.

Calm our fears.

Fill us with Your hope, joy and peace as we continue to trust in You.

WHAT IS MY PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE?

Truths and principles of the Bible.

I don't believe in an ideology, just the Bible.

I have confidence (faith) in the truth and reliability of the Bible and the existence of God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

The Bible teaches me moral standards for living life, a way of showing love and being an ambassador for Jesus Christ.

You see, there's more to life than what we see with our eyes.

There's a spiritual world with good and evil.

I choose the good, the love that comes from Jesus Christ.

There is a dark side, it's the devil and he tries to influence me but he can't win as long as I pray and read scripture.

You see, the Bible talks about getting wisdom and with wisdom I know what is better for my life.

God has shown me.

CECILE MERMELSTEIN

Cecile began writing as a child. She loved reading and took an interest in poetry later. As a child, she wrote stories on pads of paper and drew images to reflect her writing. Her goal was to become a famous author. In high school she enjoyed creative writing at Stevenson High School in Livonia, Michigan. Cecile attended a poetry reading group at Cobb's Corner Bar where she read her poetry on stage and became more passionate about writing. At age 18, she was diagnosed with Schizophrenia and took a Greyhound from Detroit to Lake View Terrace, CA She is currently at Founders House of Hope and still enjoys writing poetry, art and writing in her journal. Cecile's parents are deceased and she regularly communicates with her only sister living in Savannah, Georgia

KIDNAPPED BY GOD

I got kidnapped one day, long ago.
It was hot, but they left me in the ice and snow.
There was nowhere to run, there was nowhere to go.
Can you understand it?
It was not funny.
They stole my soul.
They stole my money.
They stole my body.
They stole my blood.
They accused me of being in the hood— what would do if you were me?
They stole my connection to infinity.
Everything I did was wrong-- they stole my heart.
My only song.
They stole the vision in my eyes.
They spoke of me, all they said were lies.
With sinister and grave deceit, they'd take away the friends I'd meet.
They'd laugh and poke fun.
They'd think it was great to even make children treat me with hate.
So even the doors of heaven had to wait and perdition thought that their evil was true.
I got tortured in some kind of human zoo that they called "Hospital."
Even Christ's Cross Calvary would not escape my fall that wasn't my fault.
I did everything Good!
But more than every living person I was misunderstood.
Have you ever had a life like me?
Good luck, Buddy.
I hope you get freed.

THERE MIGHT BE LOVE

Do you believe in the power of love?
There are different kinds that I can think of.

The love of a mother for her child.

And love insincere, although beguiled.

The love of a baby in your arms.

The love of a man showing you his charms.

The love of some looking up to his teacher.

A love romantic, as if you could reach her.

The love of the work, an artist has made.

The love of a soldier's cavalcade.

When someone gives you a special gift when emotions in your heart are swift.

The love between a sister and a brother and when you know you have no help from any other. When perfect is the Sacred Heart with togetherness that cannot part.

If you can be in love in a trice— remember the ultimate sacrifice

UNDER THE SURFACE

I've lived my life always alone.

Traversing my mind in the known and unknown.

Seeing people holding hands different people, from different lands.

And watched mothers leading a trail of kids, which being alone like me always forbids.

While eating at picnics, even ants aren't alone.

And men feeding their wives is a dangerous zone.

A usual blue sky becomes cloudy with rain.

While I talk to spirits on an astral plane I keep to myself, saying never a word while God gives me the silent treatment.

If you find that absurd and birds are in flocks flying over-head, and no one says anything to me. Not even the dead and gangs of children in the city's street make fun of me whenever we meet. And even those in the cemetery's graves seem together.

Death giving them camaraderie forever.

And I'm even alone when I'm writing this rhyme.

The final excuse for all of my time.

EXPLANATION

The fantastic truth of the world is this— Fate can take you away with a kiss.
And your future is set in a certain way.

Every hour of every day.

And if you plan everything to know will come true, still your plans might change for the best of you.

And if you decide that things aren't going to happen the water that flows is the water that's tapping.

The ocean will roll in exactly one way, while the branches of a tree will greet the new day.

And as every little leaf unfolds only the full grown tree can be what the future holds.

And while the river will rush to the sea the water collects but it's not free.

And everything in your life takes place.

In the deep star-stuff of outer space where the points of light at night look down.

The truth is Fate always wears the crown

THE GENIE

I rubbed a magic lamp and out came a Genie.

He wasn't very big, he was kind of teeny weeny.

And he said to me "time to make a wish."

I am the slave of the lamp.

You may ask for any dish or precious jewels or any wealth.

If you are sick you may ask for even good health.

So I said to the Genie "I don't want wishes or jewels or wealth or fantastic dishes. I don't want slaves to slave over me. But I have one request—I would like to be free."

The little teeny Geni looked at me and he said "I am a slave, I don't know how to be free, or grant you freedom if I myself do not even have that kind of wealth."

So I said to the Genie "I've been in chains for my whole life, with my soul's remains and the reason that I ask to be free is I want to own my own soul and me."

So the Geni said "to own your own soul, all you have to do is eat from this bowl and everything you ever wanted to be as a soul forever, you will be free."

So he handed me a bowl of some kind of stuff and I ate of it all.

And I ate of it enough and my heart lit up and my mind became wise and it was as though a veil had lifted off my eyes.

And a brilliant light shone in my mind and I realized something I never could before that my soul was the whole entire me.

And when I realized that, my whole me became free.

And I felt sorry for the Genie.

It was something to know, that some people don't eat out of their own bowl.

And because of this, they never can be free because sharing that bowl is the right way to be

THE MEANING IN IT ALL

Believe it or not the world can be good if people did goodness the way that they should.

Like the coolest taste on a mean hot day of Baptism water that can help you pray.

Like the goodness of a person's zeal.

Like the beauty that your heart can feel.

The depth there is in the deep blue sky when you kiss someone and make them sigh.

Every wonder you can see like the fantastic giant sequoia tree.

And the forest wild that goes into forever.

And a mighty typhoons' most tempters weather.

The goodness in the eternal realm of titan's ocean's on a ship at the helm.

Goodness is the most impressive thing when a man gives you his wedding ring.

And forever never had a beginning because the start of forever had no sinning.

Keep in your heart the goodest of ways and you will always find purpose in all of your days.

MY NEIGHBORHOOD

It is an open universe where planets place.
In voids made terse and life is there on everyone.
Warping around and orange sun Is earth, our home world.
Where life teams huge and what's in a centrifuge.
Of stars that shine where we've outgrown our usual old forest home.
Comets fly past distant moons.
And solar systems play their tunes.
And animals who fly can see the sky has a consistency and no one dare works without
still. Magnificent and enthralled.
Believing everything you see was made serendipity.
Keep the pace, do not allow one to doubt, to make you wonder how or why.
Only forever to know.
Only terrestrials we might outgrow.
This little world and find even more.
What stars forever have in store.

THE ULTIMATE

“I haven't any money” the pauper said.

“I can't pay for my life I can't pay if I'm dead.”

And the rich man said “I have everything I have tons of money I can party, I can swing.”
“Would you like to come to a restaurant and I'll buy you coffee or anything that you want?”

So the poor man said “I haven't eaten in days and he thanked the rich man and gave him praise. And together they sat and ate caviar at a restaurant *matre-d'* that was also four star.

And then they ate together a four-course meal and didn't notice the outside weather was snowing with zeal.

And while they were eating the poor man told his story about his years in the war, how it was gruesome and gory.

How he lost a leg, and how he couldn't work anymore, how he lost his wife and his children and how he became poor.

The hardships he went through, because the world became cruel and how God abandoned him and how Satan would rule.

How he prayed for forgiveness in Church all day and how nothing good could happen no matter how he'd pray.

It would rain on him in the sunniest times, and he'd play the guitar in the street to collect dimes.

If he'd become hungry he'd go to the mission which was the only way to get some nutrition.

And in the golden days when he'd have closets of clothes now he only wore rags or the least of those.

“Yes he said I used to have money but I drank it all away in my youngest days that were sunny I'd pray.”

“My life ever since” he said “has been on the street and I always had to beg for my drink and my meat.”

And the rich man said, “You haven't noticed, you died and your soul is in a restaurant and you left your body outside.”

“My name is Saint Peter and I’m here to take you home, you will never again be on the streets to roam.”

“Bless you my son for the hardships you have been through, from now on everlasting peace, is forever with you.”

And the poor man discovered that he became rich once more.

Because heaven came to collect him at his life’s very end.



A HEART NOT SPOKEN

I am the owner of a heart in solitude.
I kept it hidden within.
kept it mute.
I never had time for a sweet, sultry kiss.
I never could rhyme (my soul an abyss) I cared not for passion.
I cared not for pain.
Within me reason.
But never a rain.
I could not cry when I felt loss.
When angry or hurt, or evil.
Not to be cross.
My heart ejected what I thought was sin.
And all my soul kept so deep within.
Many sugar coated lore from dreams that I had before.
And hatred made me laugh out loud, even when I was in a superfluous crowd.
Before me—men would bow and pray.
And all I cared for was my own night and day.
I lived with Kings and Royalty too.
And love of things was all I knew.
My heart could not fly nor love, nor care.
Even though my soul lived there.
And all my status, and all I owned seemed not to matter.
I lived alone.
And in the mirror I did not see that I had felt the end of me.

REFLECTING ON PAST CHRISTMAS'S

The night is dark, the rain falls hard.
Christ came to give us the Spoken Word.
And as the stars glow in the sky, eternity means your soul won't die.
Your soul won't die.
Your soul won't die.
God above told not one lie that everlasting life renews because of the sacrifice of The King of the Jews.

There is a dimension, there is a place that houses your soul and gives mankind grace.
A special land for you and me made up of God's infinity.
Your soul won't die.
Your soul won't die.

God promised.
He told not one lie and knew us as one family symbolized in one Christmas tree.
Look above then.
Deep in the sky at night time to realize those stars on high.
The soul can't die.
The soul can't die.

Christ came to save us.
Each single one.
His sacred heart of God's own son.
The gift was free if you accept and therefore paid each little debt.
The soul can't die.
You keep your life.
No greater gift.
The Church of Christ's life with everlasting brotherhood.
The soul can't die.
We are all made good.

So awaken angels.
Shine like stars.
Shine planets.
Neptune, Venus, Mars.
The Kingdom Come! The infinite sky.
And the soul can't die.
The soul can't die.



OF THE MUSE

The inner mind of every man did not create the Cosmos Plan.
It won't attest to stars above.
Call itself God or Perfect Love.

It will not shine like unknown stars.
Make consequences out of wars.
It will not spin like long, dead moons.
Make hurricanes or make typhoons.

The mind cannot know the unknown.
God cannot call you if alone.
There is no nature to contrive.
Explain evolving souls alive.
Dive deep in oceans or the sky.
Make permanent in death to die.
Or respect the forest, flowers.
Count the cessation of the hours.
Climb on mountains, count the grains.
Of sand upon the dessert plains.
The mind cannot control our times
Or subterfuge the sun that shines.
Or comprehend the last frontier.
All things the mind can prospect fear.
And am of us.
Are born alone.

The soul our everlasting home.

REMEMBERING MY MOTHER

My mother loved me as all mothers do.
Even though her words were few.

She'd bundle me up when it snowed outside and strapped me in when we went for a ride. She'd make me hot chocolate when days were cold.

Wrap her arms around me though her arms were old.

Cuddle me if I had a nightmare and joke on Halloween so I wouldn't feel scared.

She'd bake me a cake for my birthday and taught me in Church how to pray.

She'd never have any prejudice, and put me to sleep with a gentle kiss.

You taught me Mother to be proud.

I'm free and I'll always remember that you loved me.

FOR FATE AND MUSES

My captured heart would hurt inside and in a blackguard I would die.
I didn't know if it was love or an illusion.

Purple—mauve.

Where elves and fairies really swirled the colors of a forest world.

I noticed unicorns were there, glowing gold with silver hair.

And dwarfs and hobbits, wizards too.

All my world is all I knew.

The flying dragon when I breathe.

Fire.

And they were honest, though called liar.

And angels were the myths of man.

Yet all these things I kept within my secret like a mystery.

Poor captured heart now set me free.

And deep within, the forest home, all my life, I've lived alone.

For paradise today is gone.

And human beings came along.

So all the mosaic made a change.

The colors completely rearranged.

And I'm a relic of the past.

A sorcerres, but no spells cast, can ever again bring these things back.

We are ethynie, the rose turned black.

And birds are really cherubim.

Old archangels caused the sin.

Destroying every living thing.

Any my poor heart, fly on the wing.

Can contemplate what caused it all.

Grace ended and there was the fall.

My heart was good!

But God killed me.

The beginning and end of Eternity.

WHAT ANGELS THINK LIKE

Did you find me?
Hello soul.

What today will be my role?

Will I be a woman grown, or will I be a soul alone?

Did you catch it?

I have no wants, no desires, no ancestral haunts.

I don't know where my soul began.

The obvious is, we are man.

But is that really the only thing?

I am a smear, High on the wing.

My connotations kept together, any way or any weather.

Any answer for is me, just don't give a cruel case be.

An angel.

Yes you, find it's free.

To symbolize a soul like me.

FOR LIBBY ON HER BIRTHDAY

I love a sister.
Sweet is true.
The sweetest sister you ever knew.

In make believe we used to play.
When in the early years of day.
We swam together, played through the times.
We had our fights so siblings say crimes.

She'd do my hair and I'd do hers.
Sometimes it just made it worse.
We'd play dolls and I liked playing cars.
In the bath tub we'd play Godzilla wars.
I'd watch science fiction on t.v.

My sister liked rock n' roll.
Radio free.
Never does she forget to say "I love you" for my birthday.

And everything we always spared, my sister and I always shared.
And kept together, through thick and thin.

Everywhere together we've been.
Even fishing, even summer's long.

She's been my best friend all along.
And no one has a sister like me.
Cute and sweet and happily.

LIFE

Life in the city.
Oh what a pity.
Sobbing my tears away.

And again, what a mess.
If I could just guess the answers to heal every day.
To be on the street where lead pulls my feet.
I watch the police drive away.

My mind is an ache.
To make no mistake.

I'm watching the pigeons today.
Do you love the slums?
Watching the bums?

Tears come easy to me.
What do I do?
Kept by a few.

At least my heart can be free.

GRATEFUL

I'm grateful for my heart and soul.
For friendship and for friendship's role.
I'm thankful that there's peace within, less anger, sin.
I'm thankful for the world. I
'm thankful for the music.
I'm thankful I have soul and life.
And that I'm free from every strife.



LIVING WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS

With mental illness, the pain inside makes frustration, takes my pride, causes me to cry and scream.

I can't wake up, I'm in a dream.

The agony of all the pain.

Questioning what could be sane.

The medication is my crutch.

Not sure if it's too much.

The dreams chase my thoughts away.

All I can do is just pray

BRENDA KISZONAK

Brenda was born in Morgan County, Ohio and lived there until the age of 12. Her family moved to Anaheim CA where she attended Anaheim High School. Brenda enjoyed English Literature and Journalism courses and was editor of the school paper called Anaranco. She attended Abilene Christian University for two years and enrolled in Mass Communication courses and Broadcasting. After graduating she interned at KTXS-TV as a sports camera person for a year. She then relocated to Fullerton CA and got a job at Government Channel 3, City of Fullerton where she was a live camera operator for the city council. She was employed there for a year while living independently at the time. Brenda is currently at Founders and enjoys working with Gary Gabriel, CEO of V-Matrix PR. Brenda began creative writing while in high school and enjoys writing today. In the future, she would like to run her own company offering tv production and film.

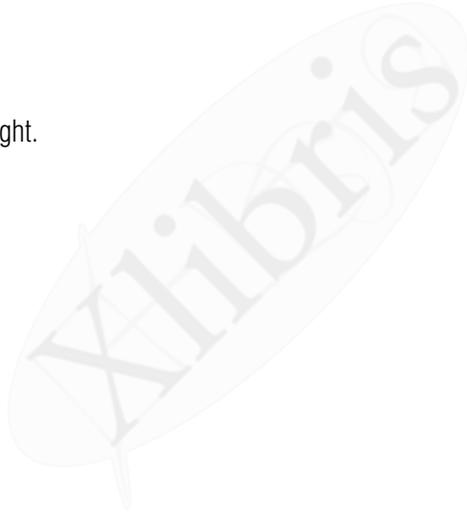
NATURE

On a bright, sunny day,
the sun is so bright.

At night time,
the wind cools me.

The trees sway.

What a beautiful night.



MY LIFE

Yes, once criminal,
dangerous minds.

I was wrong, I was right.
Now I'm in it for the fight.

Been used, abused, and scorned.

Been down that road.

Around the world.

Got my life back.
Dreaming of a good life.
I am made for love.
Love is free.
Don't disrespect me.

Wouldn't you know it.
I got it right.

THE DREAM

Dedicated to my colleague, confidante, and friend.
The dream.

The journey around the world.
No regrets do not look back.

The awakening.
Breath, back to life, without you or with you.

Keep it real.
Do not give up, do not let yourself down.
Seen this before.
Celebration, raise your glasses and meeting me halfway.

Never as it seems. Believe. Love. Peace. Harmony. Hero. Miracles.
Seeing is believing. I like it. I love you.
I am in love with you.

Stop and stare. It is my life.
Goody two shoe. Just a slow dance. Right now.

Age of innocence. Chances are hoping to be.
I just want to be. Finding you. Finding me and do not let go.
Speak no evil. Hear no evil. And from the start find out what it means.

Soul sharing our love grows.
Awaken -- I am a woman. You are a man.
Awaken us from our dreams.

Asking why. Only God knows.
Bridge of dreams.

Dreaming miracles.
Sleep.
Awake.
It was only a dream.



JENNIFER AFTON LEE

Jennifer was born in Pasadena and grew up in Arcadia with her parents and sister who is three years younger than her. Jennifer went to Temple City High School and to Azusa Pacific University where she earned a BA in Business with a minor in English. She enjoys walking, reading and writing.



Emotions casting shadows over me.
A feeling that this moment cannot last.
A present bigger than my eyes can see.

A future is what I can only dream.



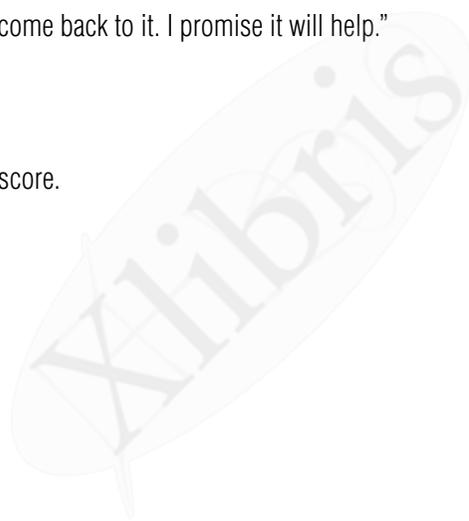
When my mind seizes me with anger,
I want to even the score.

I ask him "It's OK" he says.

"Take a break and come back to it. I promise it will help."

So I do.

And life evens the score.



A poem is a feeling then a verse.
On page it's an extension of myself.
A meaning to this life that we traverse.
Some poems are not written, only felt.



A fear gripped my heart as the unknown beat against it.
Everything seemed ugly and sinister.

There was a cloud covering any of my happiness.

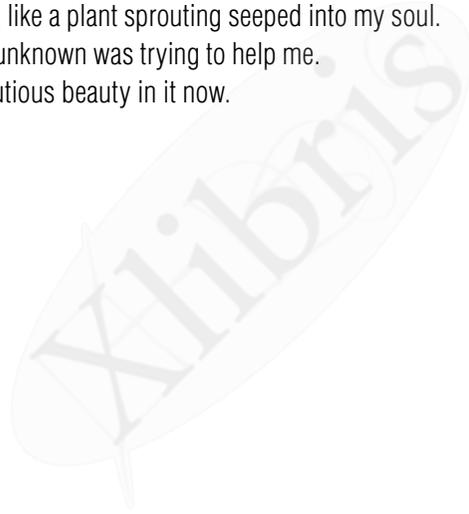
My mind was ugly, so it reflected in everything around me.

Time like waves on a beach smoothed out the terror.

People's kindness, like a plant sprouting seeped into my soul.

And I realized the unknown was trying to help me.

My mind has a cautious beauty in it now.



JOEY PEREZ

I was born in the year 1981 and when I was a few months old I caught Kawasaki Syndrome. As I was growing up I also came down with Asthma and my sister Eva took me to the hospital and the doctors put me in cold water and ice. I got treatment and overcame asthma.

I was brought up by my mom because my dad left the house and did not return. I later found out they divorced. He later came into my life when I was 16 years old. After that I entered high school. As a freshman I joined the marching band and am now a percussionist. I marched with cymbals and was way cool. I practiced marching with the bass drum and it was fun. I also wanted to show everyone I could dance. My teacher's name was Mrs. Peckot and she moved me into the middle rank. She also asked me to recruit some students to band. I was moved into intermediate class. Unfortunately I did not graduate from high school because of drug abuse. After a couple of years I graduated from Montebello Adult School. Before coming to Founders House of Hope I was in a board and care home for seven years and it was stressful and I had bad experiences there.

I OWN THIS ROAD

In the year 2012 I was in a board and care in Pico Rivera for a few years. I was doing well and the first night I got there my roommates threw a party. After a while I became much more needy than I am now. There is a drug called crystal meth. It all started around the period of time. Then everything came tumbling down. I knew I needed some help and I knew I had to change my life around. Now I have been doing well and own my road to recovery.



AS I'VE GROWN OLDER

I have now realized I've been less and less out of health.

I was on a walk and I could not catch any air.

I also can try and exercise and lift weights.

But when it comes to using the treadmill I lose plenty of breath.



TASTING THE RAINBOW OF LIFE

The rainbow is like a beautiful object to watch.

There are many things that a rainbow can show.

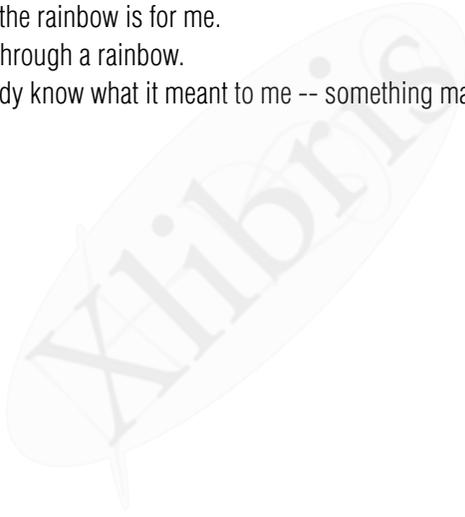
From what I've learned is that it can be a message from God meaning peace for humans.

If I had a rainbow flag it would be a color of beauty.

I know that tasting the rainbow is for me.

I would love to go through a rainbow.

I would let everybody know what it meant to me -- something magical.



The people that bring out the best in me are happy, educated, spiritual, genuine, friendly and strong minded. I can be the life of the party, everyone has told me so. I would find these people in Church, clubs, schools, family, work, parks and at Founders House of Hope. It makes me feel great when I feel safe. Having good friends who are true and loyal can bring me happiness for years.



JAY MICHAEL DERIFIELD

My name is Jay Derifield, growing up I did what I thought was usual at the time to me. I remember watching television, riding my bicycle, eating with my dad, and playing with my friends. I also remember not doing my reading or studying, even though being introduced to the bible. My parents were nice to me, and I appreciated them very much. However, my parents separated. I eventually moved around with my dad. I had a lot of good times with my him; he is a good cook and even knows how to fix up cars and trucks. We actually lived in a camper in the back of a truck. There were times when both my parents were together. I got to see parts of Washington State, Arizona, Nevada, and San Diego. Eventually I started going to school in Montebello California. I wanted to be with those who were my friends. This was cool and I got to do a lot of destructive things, I began smoking and drinking. When I was in high school, I went to a church event in an auditorium where I accepted Jesus Christ. The thing is I didn't follow through. I stayed around my high school friends even more, my habits got worse. I lived a double life. I lived the life at home that was normal, but I was also becoming problematic with my friends. I lived with different people. I ran away from home because I felt very upset. At the age of 18 I was a homeless and using drugs, I did this for maybe a year. I think I was manic, seeking pleasure. I then moved to San Diego. My paranoia started catching up with me, and my symptoms of schizophrenia were becoming a lot more noticeable. I eventually got taken back to Los Angeles and admitted to a hospital. I struggled on and off starting at age 21. My mother was my hero at the time of being diagnosed until even now at age 36. Her support got me through the toughest times of my life and, I love her with all my heart. I have been medicated, and in and out of the hospital since age 21 or 22. At age 25 I was hospitalized and locked in the psych area of the hospital. I was released on conservatorship at age 28 and I am now 36. I tried to fill the void of the absence of my family with attending church, worship, fellowship, and studying the word of God. I believe my relationship Christ and our Heavenly Father has been changing my life for the better. I no longer feel abandoned and my confidence in myself have increased. I am staying optimistic and my faith is growing. I am learning much.

MY SPIRITS

You get me feeling high.

Like a dove flying in the sky.

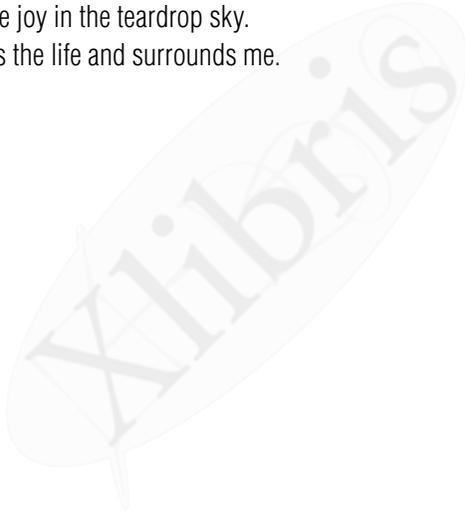
Looking out the dove's eye.

Looking for you as a tear drops from the eye.

Like a raindrop falling from the sky.

Your love brings me joy in the teardrop sky.

Your love quenches the life and surrounds me.



GRATEFUL FOR OUR FOUNDERS INTERNS AND VOLUNTEERS

A few years ago, I established an internship program at Founders House of Hope so we could invite undergraduate students to learn about our recovery program. We have students from community colleges and California State Universities pursuing degrees in psychology, sociology, social work and human services. In addition, students enrolled in my college courses express an interest in volunteering at Founders. The residents enjoy interacting with the interns and volunteers who support programming at Founders. Interns and volunteers learn the elements of a psychosocial rehabilitation program, how to facilitate skill acquisition groups and pharmacotherapy. In addition, students understand how we assess residents, write rehabilitation goals on a treatment plan and they learn about the disorders on the Schizophrenia Spectrum and Bipolar Disorders. We are very grateful to have between five and seven interns and volunteers every semester at Founders.

As their supervisor, I am impressed with the strong commitment to learning these students make and their capacity for empathy and unconditional positive regard for the residents. The relationships they engender with residents is healing, comforting and it conveys to residents that hope, optimism and recovery is possible. A few residents report feeling socially isolated and having interns and volunteers spending time with them has them feeling like they matter. The sincere investment interns and volunteers make in creating caring relationships with residents is visible, comforting and it acknowledges for each resident they are accepted and are valued. Finally, and for me, there are glorious moments when we see our interns and volunteers learn and acquire skills, in addition to gaining admission to MSW and doctoral programs in psychology.

KIMBERLY BROWN

Being at Founder's House of Hope and spending time with the residents there, even for a short time, is an experience that I wish everyone could have. Founders is a place where residents can feel loved and appreciated for who they are without concern for how they will be perceived based on a diagnosis. While visiting Founders, I saw the true compassion of the team of providers who want the best for the residents. Dr. Levy's group meetings with the residents give them the resources, encouragement, sense of community, and motivation to accomplish almost anything they want to during their time at Founder's. If residents wanted to take classes at the local school for adults, Dr. Levy and the Founder's team would do everything possible to make that happen. If a resident accomplished something great such as getting a job or doing well on a test, Dr. Levy and everyone at Founders made sure to recognize that incredible achievement in a meaningful way. These are just a few examples of how I learned what compassionate treatment looks like, and how it can immensely help someone with psychological problems.

While there are countless examples of the dedication of the staff at Founders, perhaps the most important thing I learned was how caring the residents themselves are. As a college student figuring out how I wanted to become involved in the field of psychology, residents at Founders never failed to ask me how I was doing or how my classes were going. They would be happy for me when I did well on an exam, and they would encourage me to be the best student I could be. Dr. Levy always taught me to keep one question in mind when interacting with others: "What's it like to be you for a day?" I always kept this in mind while visiting the residents at Founders and I valued even learning just a little bit about what their life is like. But it always meant the world to me that the residents wanted to know the same about me despite their own struggles and needs; they wanted to learn about my life and what it's like to be me for a day. That curiosity and kindness is something I will never forget about everyone at Founders. The kindness I observed in both the Founders staff and residents made for an incredibly unique environment that I hope always remains at Founders House of Hope, and that I hope everyone has a chance to experience.

ANNETTE MULINIX

One semester morning there was a place in Artesia, California that would change my perspective on life forever. The engagement, the feelings and the avenue of change was a delight. Inner love was felt throughout as we sat in a little room on the sunny side of Pioneer where residents shared their inner most insecurities and dreams. Wings of laughter, love and hope were spread, and successes and sorrow were to follow as we came to the realization that tomorrow is going to fly with choice and be filled with happiness or content.



SALLY GONZALEZ

As an intern, it's the very first opportunity to experience what the professional world is all about. I learned, gained experience, and built into a more knowledgeable person than before after completing my internship at Founders House of Hope. During this time, I was able to integrate and apply theories, values, skills, and knowledge under the supervision of an outstanding professional, Dr. Elijah Levy. I really appreciated Dr. Levy's willingness to let me explore all of the departments within the organization. I had the opportunity to sit during group meetings and design appropriate interventions to increase the resident's functional capacity to manage their illness and overall level of functioning. I have gained many valuable skills in different areas that will bring me closer to my goals, thanks to his guidance. Thanks to this opportunity, I gained valuable insight into consumers living with Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders and Mood Disorders. Dr. Levy allowed me to observe the psychiatric rehabilitation program from the ground up and comprehend the effects of our residents being marginalized and socially stigmatized with Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders and Mood Disorders on a daily basis.

This internship has definitely increased my interest in pursuing a career that allows me to serve our community. I decided to become a Human Service professional because I have a desire to serve humanity. This is my main motivation and reason for choosing Human Services as my professional career. I want to identify and select interventions that encourage growth and goal attainment in our community. Dr. Levy allowed me to work on various projects, and I had the chance to observe numerous aspects of individuals with Schizophrenia Spectrum and Other Psychotic Disorders and Mood Disorders and design appropriate interventions that enable them to discover more about themselves and their resilience.

Thank you for accepting me as an intern. It was a fantastic experience that prepared me to start my career confidently. The skills, ideas, and professionalism I am now armed with are partly thanks to you. It was a pleasure to work at Founders House of Hope, and I know these skills and experiences will help me throughout my career. I

wanted to thank you for the tremendous support you have given me throughout my time here. It has been a pivotal step that has brought me closer to beginning my career.

I cannot accurately express how indebted I feel to Dr. Levy, who patiently taught me during my internship. He taught me invaluable lessons that will undoubtedly spark my career for many years to come. There are so many beautiful memories that I'll cherish with both you and the rest of the team.

Thank you again for all of your support and for all of the opportunities you have given me.

Sally Gonzalez



CHINDI DENE

When the rain of ignorance comes, floods the earth and slums with the water of tyranny that floats above humanity.

Don't ignore the sound of the drums that announce the oppression of the souls who were vanished from liberty and captive as sinners.

Be aware of the tempest that brings pain and darkness to humans' capacity to release spirits from centuries of chains.

Among the winds of destruction that demolish the umbrella of protection and the dusk that imprison the light of the truth.

Waterfalls with sorrowful songs that free the haunts from the dominant wolves that devour their privileges with their morality.

The winds of freedom that reveal the visions of fearful birds that wanted to shed the torturous stain of stigma and shame.

Storms of hunters that restricted the shine of beautiful stars that were restricted from dance and confined to the silence.

Rain that washes away the bloodshed of thy dene who bravely hold the mighty torch keen to light the sunset gates to those advocates of justice and fate.

The force of that was restored to those that were deprived of their right to modern life and were able to get their place in sacred space.

Sunrise of hope that slowly will come, where the heart of the dene will fight and rest from their battle of the fray.

RAJAH BROWN

My time at Founders House of Hope has been very exciting and very intriguing. What I learned at Founders is being patient and also I learned that just by listening you can be really helping someone. Also while I was at Founders I learned how to complete assessments by working with my internship leader. Also I got to meet the residents who were very nice and fun to talk to. The residents have so many talents that range from singing, drawing, and diamond painting. So overall my time working with the resident at founders was really different and very interesting because of their stories about their mental illness and just to be able to here the joy in their voice when they came to group. I will definitely back to Founders because of the residents and the staff.

TAMARA ANDRES

It is always a tremendous honor when I am invited to participate in groups, events, and outings with residents of Founders House of Hope. Not only do I have the opportunity to learn about and see for myself the genuine care that goes into providing a safe and growth-minded environment for residents, I also have the sheer privilege to spend quality time talking and listening while residents share plans for the day, weeks, months, and years to come. I am always so impressed and wholeheartedly moved by the list of goals and dreams they share with me while exhibiting excitement, confidence, pride for themselves, and of course gleaming smiles.

I believe the best part is how I clearly see the appreciation and respect in resident's eyes for Dr. Levy, interns, and others who, with their extraordinarily compassionate hearts, return the same amount of respect and admiration. The amount of guidance and encouragement provided to residents, who are sifting through the complexity of everyday life, is astounding, which gives me hope that there are others out there who share the same passion. With every visit to Founders, I leave with overwhelming emotion, a full heart, and always looking forward to the next time.

NICHOLAS MARSHALL

My experience at Founders House of Hope has shown me the warmth and capability of the residents. Observing and participating in group therapy has helped me understand the resilience of the individuals involved. When first pursuing a career in psychology, I asked Professor Levy how professionals work and care for clients. He explained how empathy was one of the most important characteristics of clinicians. As I visited Founders, I was able to see his rapport with residents in practice. In the sessions residents were quite candid when speaking which revealed the success of effective therapy and care. Many of the residents came to sessions with stories or artwork that they had recently done. Residents were enrolling in education programs or starting new jobs which impacted me because of the accomplishments they were proud to tell. Each time I visited Founders, I left with an admiration for the residents, professionals, and care that the residents received. I have become enthused and excited for a career in psychology because of my experiences with Professor Levy and residents at Founders House of Hope.

KAITLYN HAGAN (FUTURE CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST)

My time interning at Founder's House of Hope has impacted my life in the most meaningful ways. I had an amazing opportunity to shadow Dr. Levy and get hands on experience of co-facilitating groups, basic counseling skills, getting to know each resident. This experience has led me down the path of pursuing a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology. After graduating with my degree, I envision myself being employed at a nonprofit center providing services such as aid and access to resources enabling individuals to enroll in academic programs, receive housing, and other essential services. I am also interested in advocating for these populations at the state and federal level, being involved in writing policy and legislating for access to resources. I am eternally grateful to each and every resident who inspired me to continue my studies and pursue my personal and professional goals. I owe a huge thank you to the residents who have taught me perseverance, dedication, and what it means to be a competent healthcare provider. I will cherish my time here for the entirety of my career.

ANITA BILANJIAN

During my time at Founders House of Hope, as a volunteer, I learned so much. I learned about the daily lives of the residents and got to spend time with them. I enjoyed all the time I spent with them, getting to know them on a more personal level. Overall, I had a great experience at Founders House of Hope and I loved spending time with the residents.



ALMA SANCHEZ, SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE STUDENT

My internship at Founders has definitely fueled my passion to continue to serve the most vulnerable populations. The residents at Founders carry their hopes and dreams in their hearts. They are full of talent, learning ways to cope with their illness. It was amazing to witness these brilliant minds cope through writing, working in groups, and crafting. The residents' poetry offers valuable insights into their world to help us understand, relate to, and keep us grounded in our human experiences.

TYLER LATTENHAUER

Internships are valuable for gaining experience in the workforce. As a student who studied Psychology, I had the opportunity to engage in a formal internship at Founder's House of Hope, the facility that houses the authors of this book. I formed strong connections with my fellow interns, my mentor, and the residents. There is a dark stigma surrounding mental illness, especially severe, life altering conditions such as schizophrenia and mood disorders. Not once during my time at Founders was that stigma reinforced. I was amazed by the kind, smart, talented, and loving individuals that I had the privilege of working with during my internship. Not only did I form strong connections, but I gained beneficial hands-on experience. I learned so much about myself and my passion for continuing the path toward helping others that are in need. Each resident that I met with left an imprint on my heart. I can't thank them enough for accepting me into the program and allowing me to help guide them. I will continue my mission to help those struggling with mental illness. I will help them embrace their sense of self and their talents to improve their quality of life. I want others to feel they have lived worthy and valuable lives. Everyone deserves to become the best version of themselves, and I will strive to be a part of that process.

NANCY YVETTE ESCOBAR

I had a great learning experience interning at Founders House of Hope with Dr. Levy. During my time at Founders, I had the opportunity to meet many residents from all walks of life. Each one of them had a unique story to tell that truly touched my heart. I got to understand the lives of many residents and how they ended up at Founders seeking a new beginning. I appreciate Dr. Levy for mentoring and supporting us interns in our academic journey. Not only did I learn from him but I am also grateful for all the residents who shined a light and confirmed the many reasons why I chose Social Work as my career.

