

# BELOVED ARTS

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**EXPRESSION AS A PRAXIS OF LIBERATION**

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BY  
SUFFOLK COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S  
DEPARTMENT



EDITED BY  
DIANA SAINTIL

**A COLORING AND POETRY BOOK**

by incarcerated men and women at the Suffolk County Sheriff's  
Department and students at Boston University



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**Beloved Arts:** A curatorial collaboration of incarcerated men and women at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and students at Boston University who explore the praxis of liberation through expressive arts at the nexus of mental, emotional and spiritual health. The artists' pursuit of identity within community calls for embodied empathy and humanity, the spirit and essence of **Beloved Community**, toward the point of convergence - love. Their art of storytelling, visual and performance, galvanizes people to revolutionize whose stories are told and how voices are amplified in our collective pursuit of liberation.

# Response(ART)ability

The unprecedented times brought on by COVID-19, presented an ingenious opportunity for dialogue through the arts. Men and women at the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department (SCSD) initiated the dialogue by expressing themselves through poems and vignettes, and students at Boston University (BU) took on the response(ART)ability to respond with insight and intentionality - *not interpretation.*

# COMMUNITY'S STATEMENTS

There are no mistakes when you are trying to grow and improve there are just moments for opportunities and growth. That is the golden rule when these women and men enter into the creative learning space. To have the honor to witness each student enter into their own creative process was really inspirational. As each person opened themselves up to the endless possibilities of what liberation, love and community means to them. Each piece of art is a window into each individual and you will find something heart touching in each painting. Not only are the paintings powerful but the voices that go along with them are powerful too. This is an opportunity for the men and women to have their voices be heard and seen, because every person has the right to take up space in the world. Through the use of music, art, reflection and compassionate teachers, each person was able to step into a space that didn't have them confined to a label, and instead allowed them to enter a space where they are valued for the whole person they are. It is through art and the willingness to show up for oneself that allows opportunities of growth and change.

-Zandra

It was a mutually cathartic experience to share a milieu that exposed the brokenness of humanity juxtaposed with hope through embodied empathy as the stroke of pens and paint brushes alike released hate for love, retribution for forgiveness, pain for peace, apathy for validation and sorrow for joy.

-Diana

The beautiful thing about art is that it can be appreciated from a distance over zoom. I may not have been in the same room as the artists, but, for a brief moment, aspects of the beloved community emerged as we all faced each other (over zoom) and delighted in each other's artwork.

-Peter

I found this experience to be healing and therapeutic.

-Antoine

# COMMUNITY'S STATEMENTS

It was a pleasure working with both the Women and the Men on this Beloved Arts: Expression as a Praxis of Liberation. The art of creation the lights of joy in their eyes and hearts...Women and Men, in harmony come together to speak another language of expression. Through their Writing and Arts, I found them relaxed, happy to see their ideas and conversations on what if ... how do I do ... to then put on paper, to canvas, and express art in a different settling environment. As they would talk among themselves with music, they would express their joy being in this class; always asking for guidance and to be acknowledged if they were on the track with their arts and writing. Their creation in art, bringing a new combination of elements in their paint tones of colors on canvas to preference of choice, gave them such pleasure and freedom of doing anything they put their mind to do. It was like being with professionals in the room. They were at their best behavior and total respect to one another. As one would compliment their work and give them feedback, they would sing back the songs that were provided to them through the Zoom class instructors. The Women and the Men have asked if this program can continue, so others can also benefit like they did...

Thank You ☺

Fernando

"Too many incarcerated people's voices are silenced or dimly heard. If there is any project which aims to amplify their voices, and potentially help the wider world to understand their experiences, then I want to be a part of it."

-Leah

This experience reminded me that my family carries the cross for me.

-Jose

Although I am in jail, I set myself free every moment I was drawing.

-Dione

# ARTISTS

ARTIST	PAGE(S)
Antoine	31, 34, 35
Autumn	58
Carl	19
Dashawn	17, 26, 53, 54
Diana	9, 13, 15, 18, 21, 27, 29, 33, 45
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# DECLARATION

*By Randy*

He has by declaring War against us.  
ravaged our Lives our  
People.

Mercenaries complete the Death  
of  
a civilized Nation.

He has constrained our Citizens to bear Arms against  
Brethren, or to fall by their  
Hands.

He has excited Insurrections amongst us  
Warfare  
Destruction, of all Conditions.

In every stage we have humble  
Prince, is  
a Tyrant to be Ruler of a free People.

have we Brethren  
been deaf to the Voice of Justice

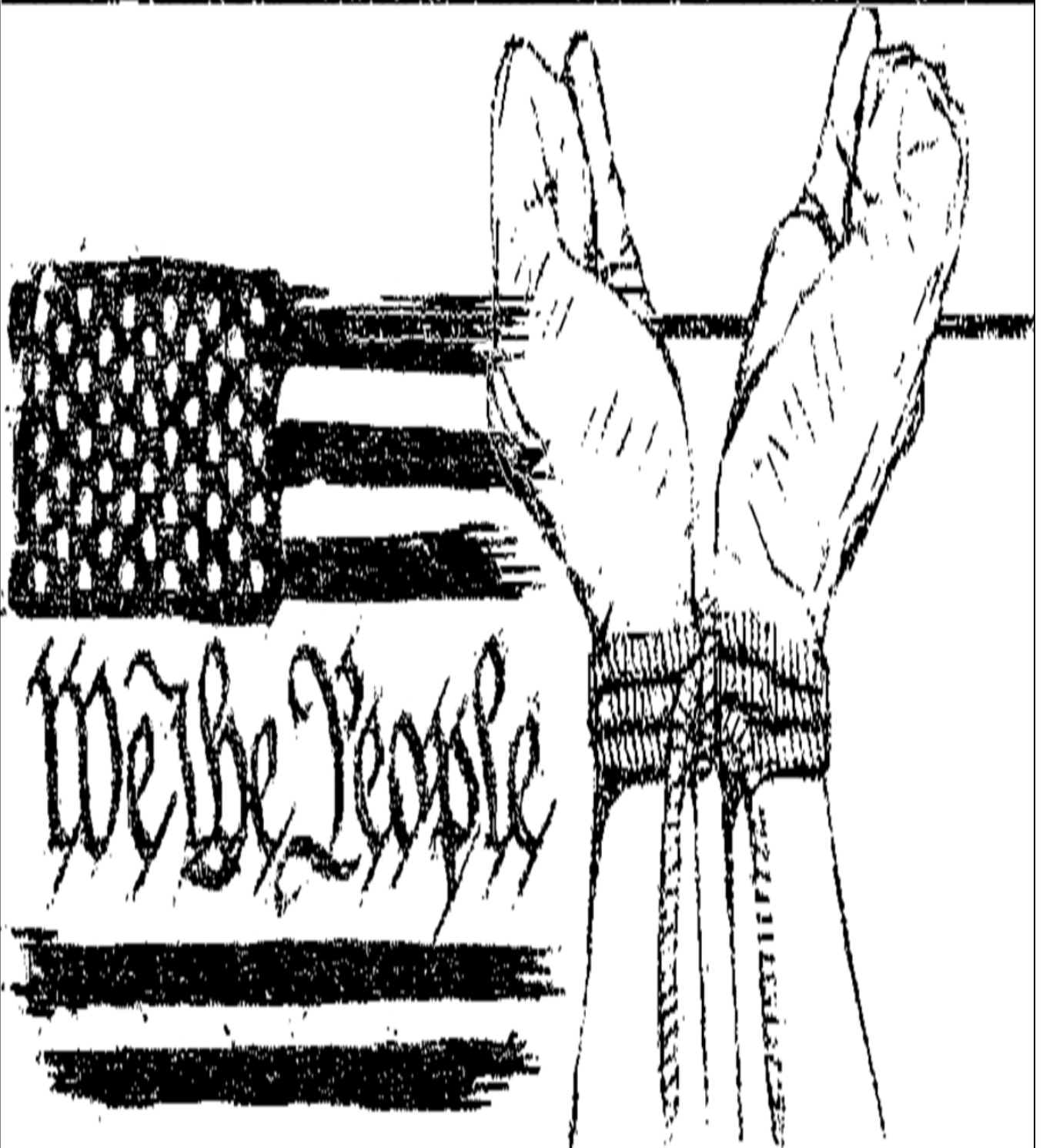
as the rest of Mankind

to the Supreme World our  
People Colonies  
ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT  
from all Allegiance to the Crown  
to be totally dissolved;

we  
mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our fortunes, and our sacred Honor.



# VOICES OF JUSTICE



# The Truth About the Pursuit of Power

*By Jimmy*

The truth about the pursuit of power  
can be found in the trail it leaves behind.  
Blood has been dragged across this land  
staining the soil for far too long.

Voices have been silenced;  
masses have been kept down;  
lives have been stolen.

And yet, we wave a flag,  
proud of the accomplishments of our country;  
We hold our hands over our hearts,  
exclaiming “liberty and justice for all.”

Let that sink in – For all. For *all*?  
Our country seems to have forgotten the definition of all.  
We say “Justice is blind,”  
or has Lady Justice turned a blind eye to all of the injustices committed?

Our country has created a monster,  
a monster that has been festering for decades.  
Those among the top in our country live in fear,  
fear that this monster will not be strong enough to keep the people down.

So, they expand the discriminatory systems  
to reach new heights and widen its (wing) span,  
Trapping more prey for their predator.

But, enough is enough.  
We must stop feeding the beast.

Matthew 24:28

For as the lightning come from  
the east and shines to the west  
also will the coming of the Son of Man be  
For wherever the carcass is,  
there the Eagles will be  
gathered together.



# **Misdirected Anger**

*By Mark*

Why are you mad when I do what I do?

Can't you see I learned from you.

Have you forgotten the torch led gathering in the dark night;

You, the original terrorist, causing death from sheer fright.

The armed militia that crumbled a village.

Your angry soldiers that raped, robed and pillaged.

We meant you no evil, we caused you no harm.

Yet, the thought of me breathing was cause for alarm.

Now centuries later, our numbers are strong,

And we're smart enough to prove you wrong.

So, we'll use your rules and written laws,

No matter how bias, no matter how flawed.

We will gather, assemble and march in group;

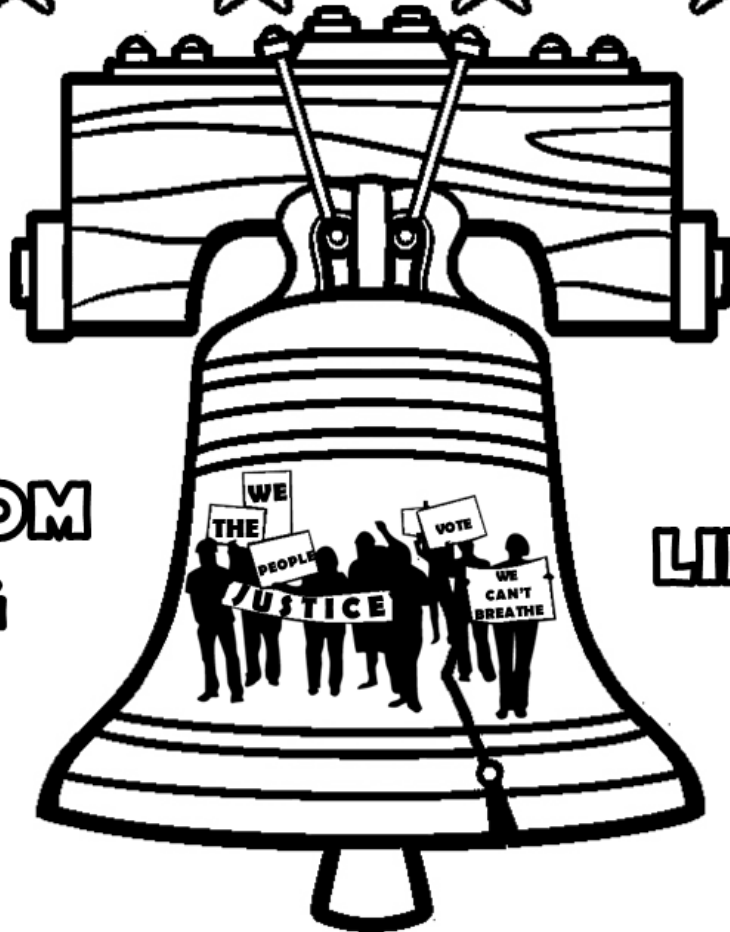
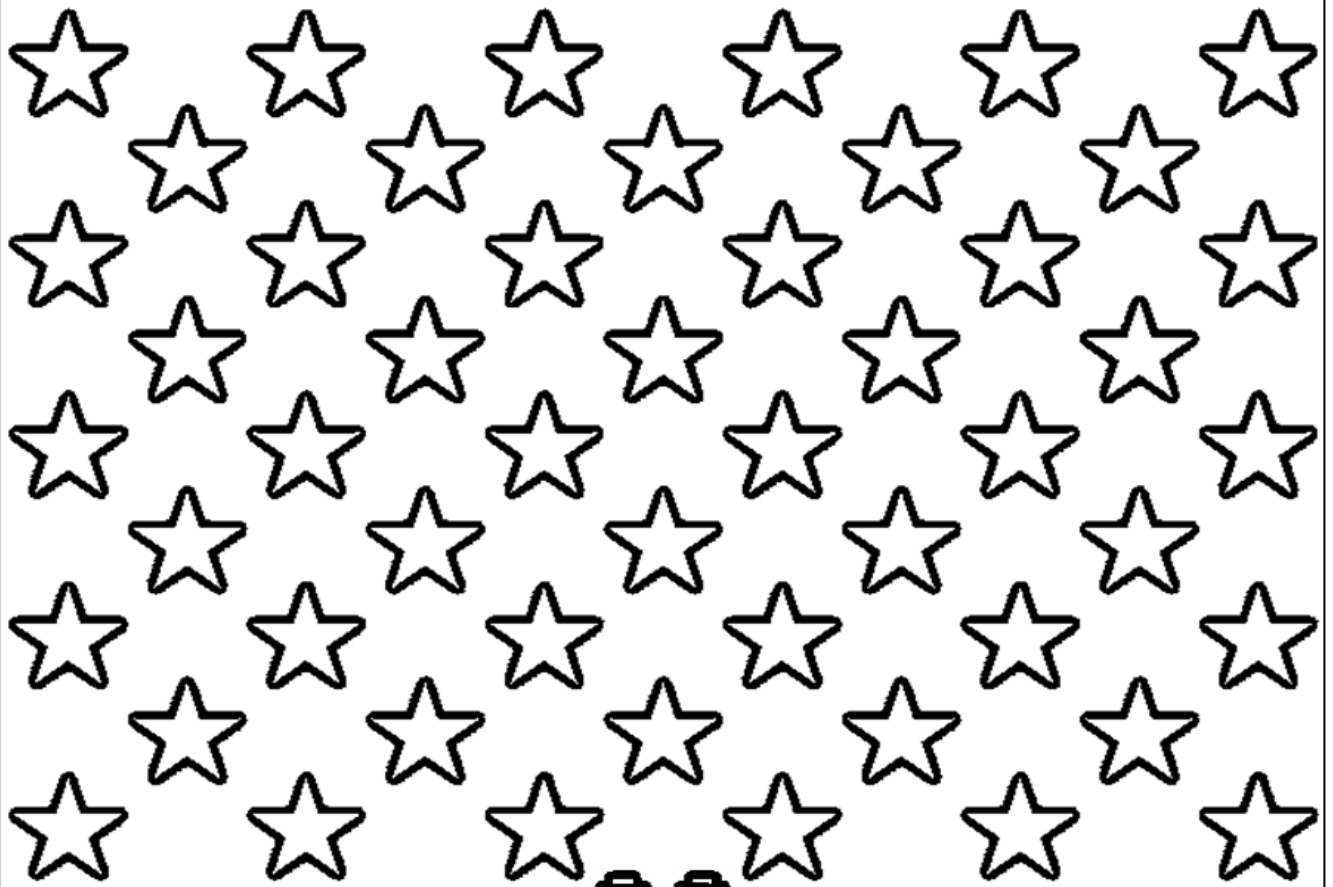
We will organize, vote and form our own troop.

When the laws were made we weren't your equal,

But now things have changed in history's sequel.

Now, I can say whatever I feel and act just like you.

I'm following the rules that I learned from you.



**LET  
FREEDOM  
RING**

**CIVIL  
LIBERTIES**

# BIG TIME KING

*By Ian*

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE BEING TRAPPED IN A CELL?

CAGED UP LIKE AN ANIMAL LIVING IN HELL.

CLOUDY DAYS, COLD NIGHTS, SHEDDING TEAR IN MY CELL.

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS, DARK VISION, WHO DO I TELL?

BATTLES WITH THE ENEMY.

HE THOUGHT IT WAS THE END OF ME.

THE LIGHT SHINED BRIGHT!

BRIGHTER THAN THE SUN IN ME.

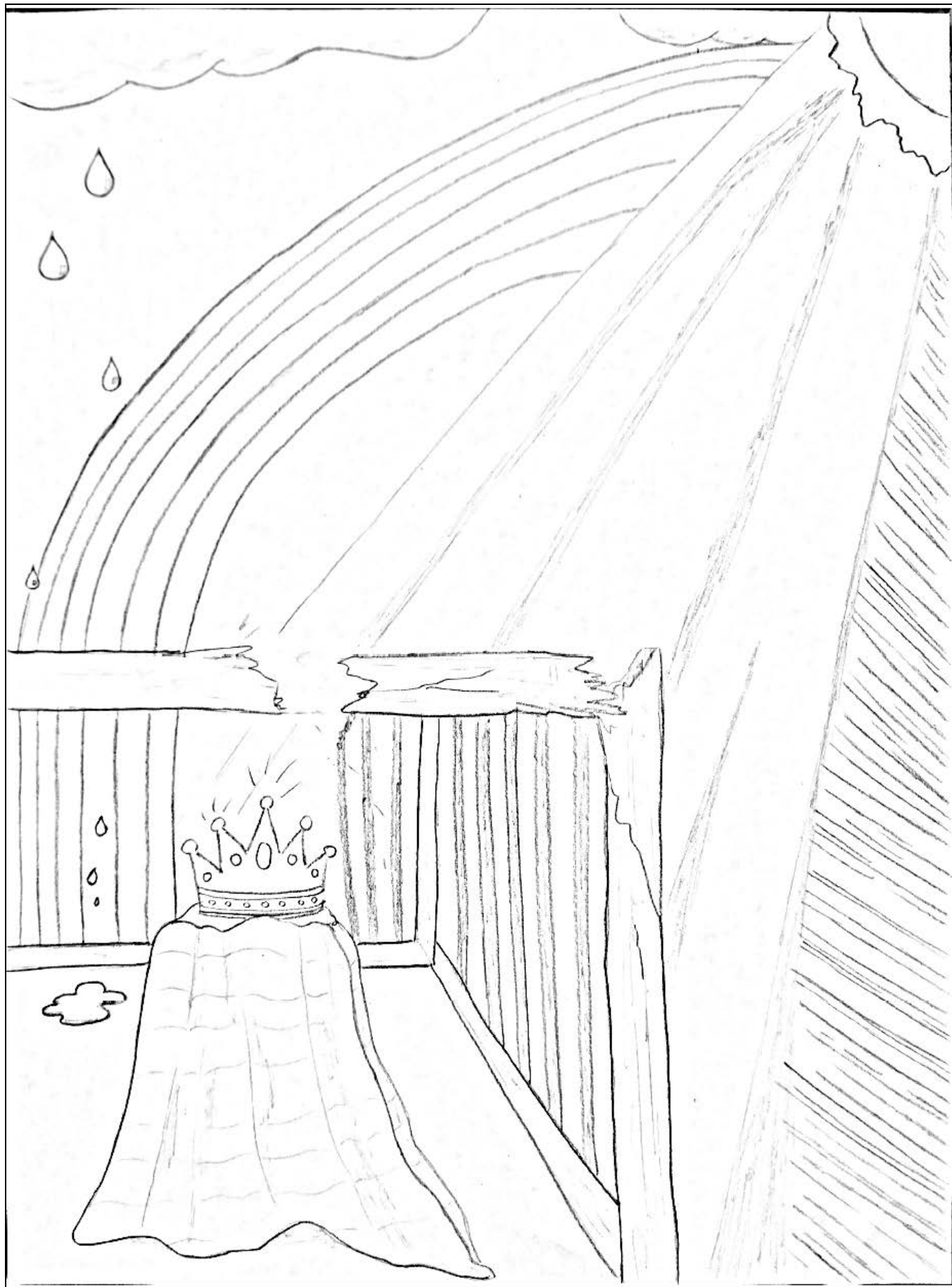
FAITH, PRAYER, IN THE WORD.

THERE IS NO KILLING GOD'S PLAN.

THE TRUE SPIRIT OF A MAN.

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# 20 Minutes

By Dashawn

*(\*Thank you for using securus you may start your conversation now)*

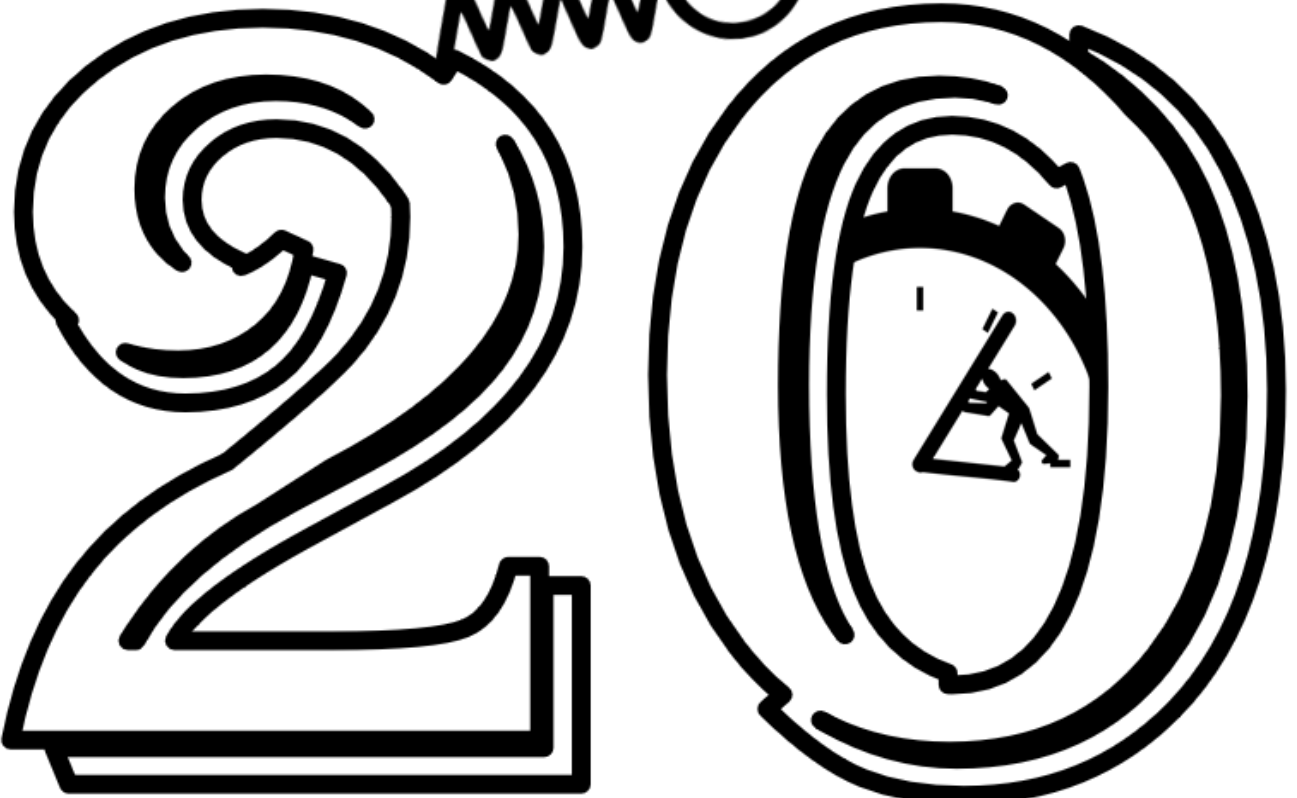
*“Hey dad I miss you. Today I did macaroni art in class. I had a good Halloween. I was Spiderman this time, the Black Spiderman. I wanted you to be the big Spiderman with me, but there's next time – you can be it with me next time. I cried thinking of you. I have dreams of us playing with my toys; it really is different without you here. I wish you made better choices, but it's OK – I still love you. Me and mommy always talk about you. I tell everybody how I look like you; they say I act like you. Daddy why you say don't be like you? Or that I should be better than you? I can't wait till you're home so you can buy me all the toys I want. I hope you're home for Christmas. Mommy showed me how to pray, so I pray for you. Can you pick me up like you always do? I know you can. Daddy why they say you're a bad guy? How come they take daddy's away from the kids? I don't like the place you're in, they're stupid and mean. Be strong daddy, you can't give up. Nana got me my Spiderman toy, but I still want my Power Rangers she promised”*

*(\*you have one minute left)*

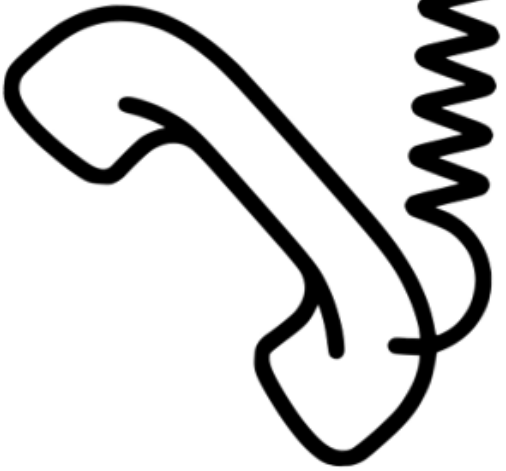
*“How come they always say that? I don't want to hang up yet. I got so much to tell you: what I ate, who I played with in school, my teacher, my homework and all that. I love yo-”*

*(\* thank you for using securus goodbye)*

*I love yo-*



*thank you for  
using securus  
goodbye*



# WHO AM I

By **ضدق**

Who Am I?

I Am More Than Just Dark Skin Color,  
I Am More Than Just Cherokee Native Descent,  
I Am More Than Just The Systematically Oppressed,  
I Am More Than Being Ignorant And Under Educated,  
I Am More Than Just Poor Decisions And Missed Opportunity,  
I Am More Than A Criminal Record,

Who Am I?

I Am More Than A South Boston High School Graduate,  
I Am More Than Being Intelligent,  
I Am More Than Being Muslim,  
I Am More Than Just A Lover Of Science,  
I Am More Than Just One Who Values Loyalty,  
I Am More Than One Who Is In Search Of Love That's Authentic,

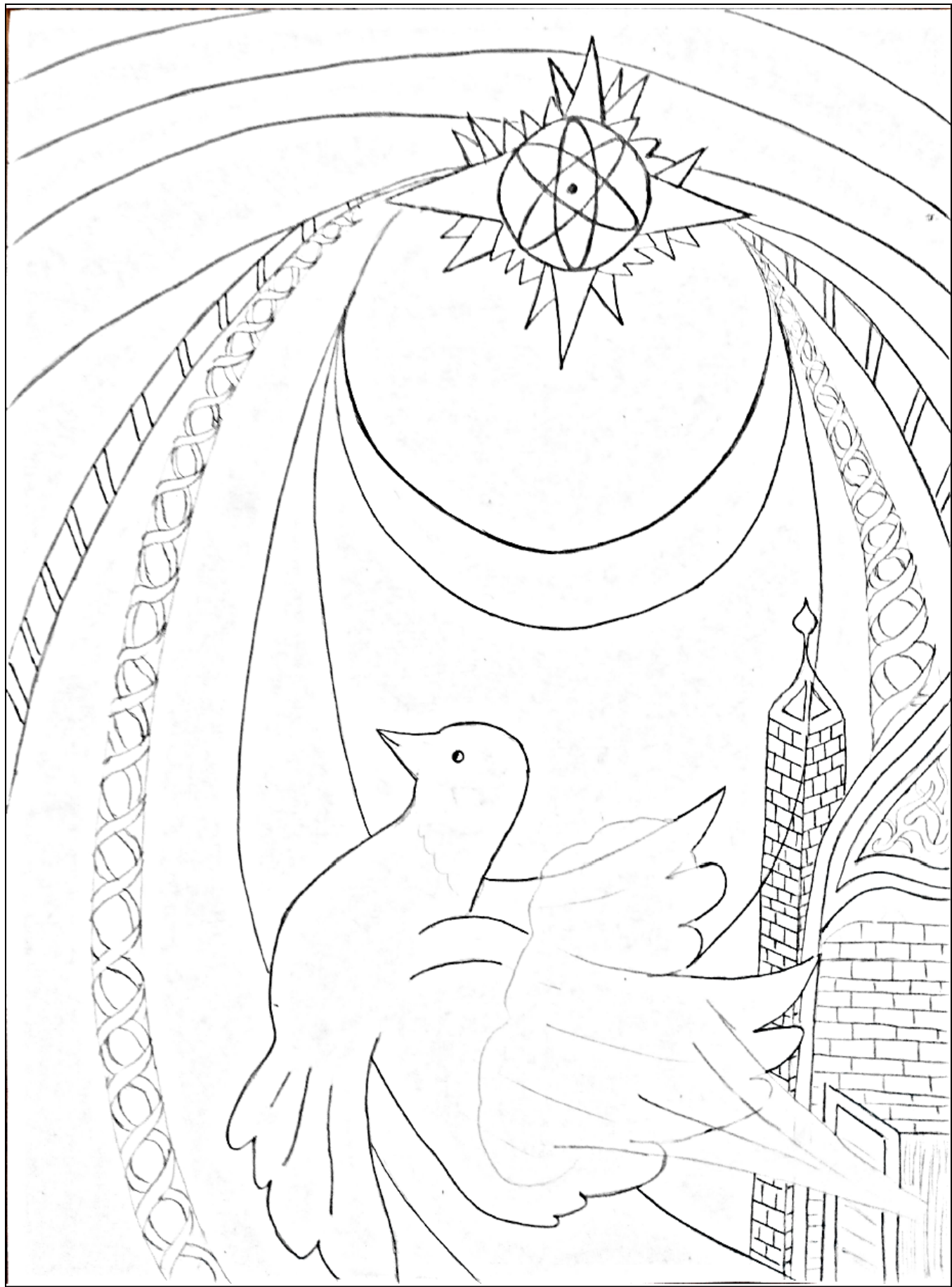
Who Am I?

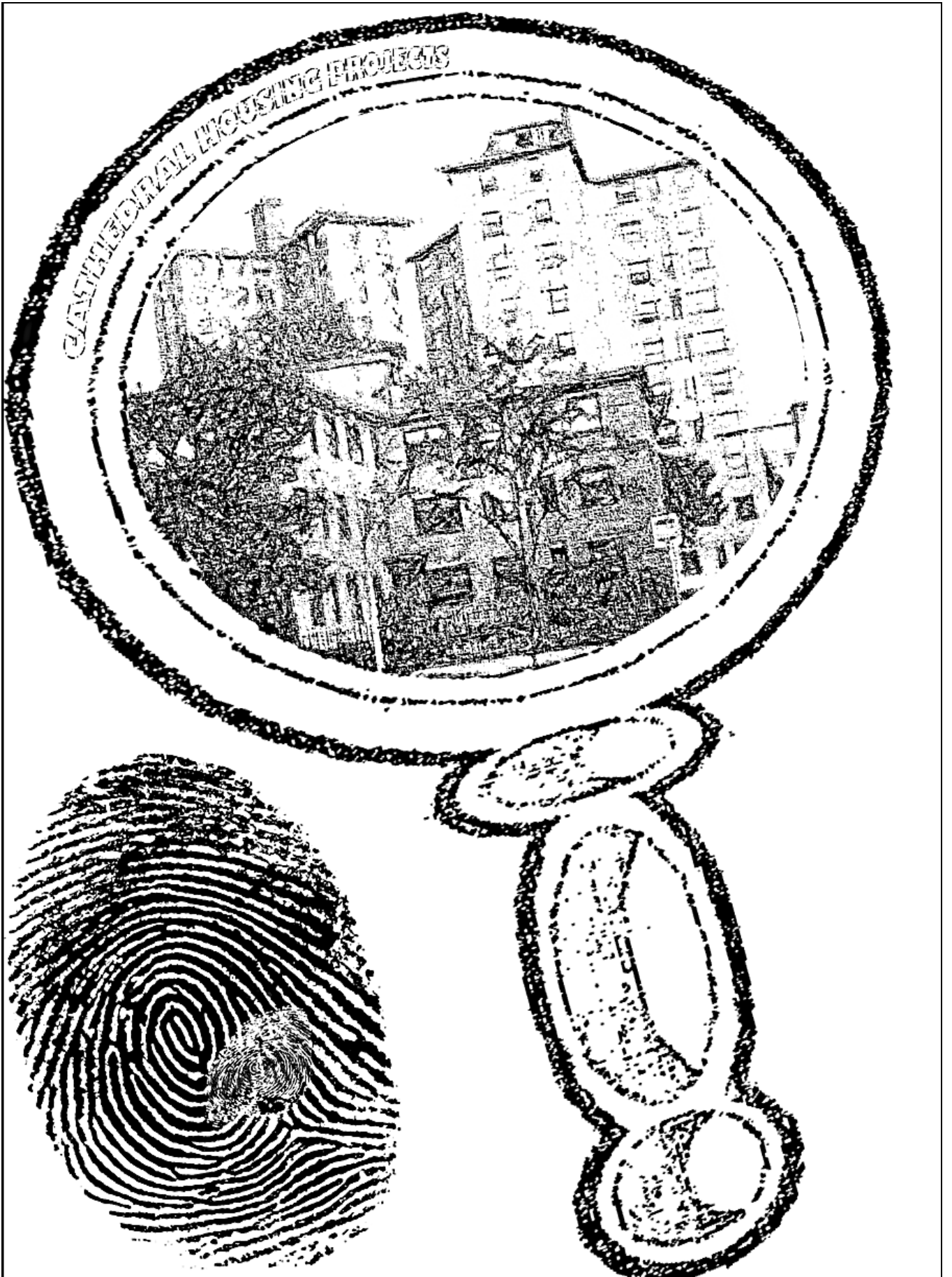
I Am A Spiritual Being Having An Earthly Experience,  
I Am The Energy Of Life, The Breath Of God,  
I Am Consciousness Awaken,  
I Am All That's Within You.....  
I Am The Universe Aware Of Itself,

Who Am I?

..... I am **ضدق**

I Am From A Place Where You Hear More Gun Shots Than Birds Singing,  
A Place Where Children Are Called Home By Dusk,  
I Am From A Place Where The Sounds Of Sirens Are As Normal As Music,  
A Place Where You Won't Find Many Fathers,  
I Am From A Place Where I Would Yell "Ma," And Ten Women Would Come To The Window,  
*Except For My Mother*  
A Place Where Your Mother Gave Permission To The Neighbors To Whoop Your Ass,  
I Am From A Place Where You Have To Pay The Taxi In Advance To Get A Ride Home,  
A Place Where Taxi Cabs Won't Stop To Pick You Up,  
I'm From A Pace Where Drug Dealers Would Buy The Neighborhood Kids Ice Cream,  
A Place Where Everyone Spoke Your Business To Everyone Except The Government,  
I'm From A Place Where The Police Was Not Welcome,  
A Place Where Apartments Were Transferred Into Home,  
I Am From A Place Where You Can Still Find Happiness Among The Sad,  
I Am From The Jungle Made Of Concrete Located In The South End Of Boston,  
I Am From The Tan Brix Of The Cathedral Projects,  
A Place I Was Once Ashamed Of,  
A Place That Shaped Who I Am Today.





# These hands.

*By Shishy*

**These hands** stay bound together, evidence of our oppressors

**These hands** full of possibility, the world may never get to see

**These hands** living in captivity, longing to be set free

**These hands** cast aside hidden away, waiting for that fateful day

**These hands** left alone in the dark, nothing could put out that spark

**These hands** generations of broken homes, revelations like a drone

**These hands** forgotten and dismissed hold on to precious gifts.

**These hands** wait for us to understand, change must be brought to  
this land

**These hands.**



PUT DOWN THE PHONE

pings posts NEWS HEADLINE: T R A G E D Y ... again keep scrolling  
blasts beeps friend request zoom meeting  
buzzes **bringg bringg bringg** BRINGGGGGBUZZ  
50 new emails 55 new emails 100 new emails 47 unread messages

**BRINGGGGGGGBUZZBUZZBUZZ**

<< Hello? >>

<< listen >>

<< who is this?>>

<< we don't have much time >>

<<what?>> <<LISTEN>>

<< the noise it, it's too much >>

<< no not to THAT >> **bringg bringg**  
**bringg**

<< put down the phone >>

<< but i need to stay connected to people! >>

*\*Your collect call will end soon\**

<< we don't have much time, please listen

>>

<< I will >>

<< listen and share their stories >>

*BEEP \*the phone call has ended\**

Pain pings as the noise distracts from fear.

Why is there so much fear?

Fear to think, create, and love. So turn it off, tune it out, that's what we do. But what if we tuned in to the real world? What if we connected with people, consumed their art and listened to their stories? What then?

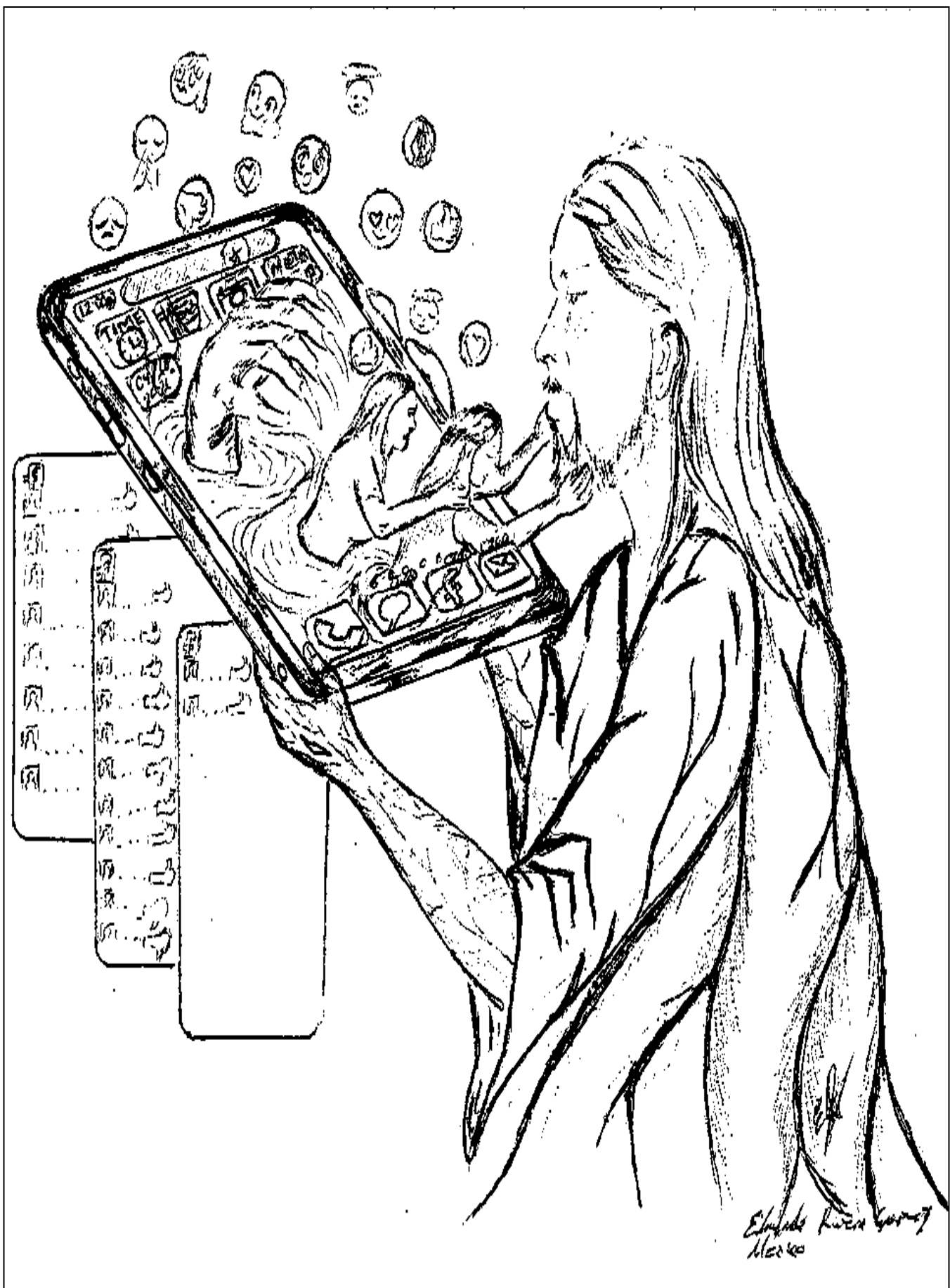
Break down the bars that keep us from one another.

Break through the screen that holds us back from ourselves and from others.

Break up with the notion that things are ok; they aren't.

Write a letter. Make some art. Sing a song. Put down the phone. With love.



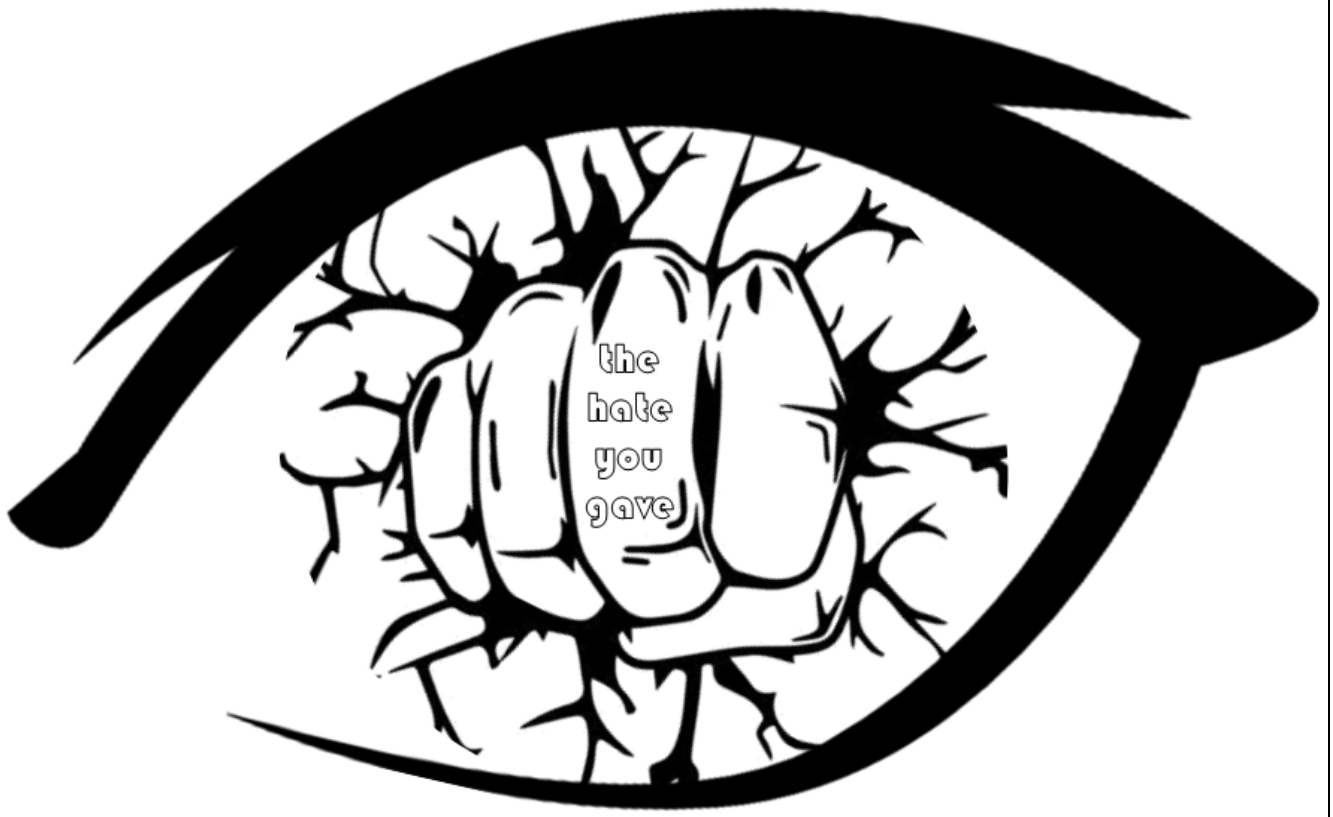


# **Mean Mug**

*By Dashawn*

**Finally starting to see the world for what it is.  
Seeing that my skin color is like a cage instead of a badge of  
honor.  
So used to being judged for my looks and not for the person  
you're looking at.  
F\*\*\* it though  
Imma die this way 'cause that's the life I was given.  
But since you looking so hard,  
let me tell you what you staring at...  
I am the vengeful spirit of Emmett Till,  
Martin Luther's dark "other side",  
I am Huey Newton's rage,  
Malcolm X's actions if still alive,  
I am "the hate you gave" that 2Pac mentioned plus thousands of  
slaves who lost their lives before it was taken.  
The continuance of Toussaint's revolution,  
a war hero in the making.  
The product of my history and ancestors collected spilled blood,  
nothing like you wannabe gangsters or two bit thugs,  
no, nothing like that at all,  
I am the fear of excellence that made Jim Crow make these laws;  
gathered by trees that was used for lynching,  
plus all the scars from the backs of the whipped!  
Yes, the times have changed but there's no changing that s\*\*\*,  
so to put it short  
I am "coming" back with a fist of fury,  
demanding a just trial with an all Black jury.  
Ready to give back what you gave with an even bitter taste,  
this is what your staring at when you look in my face.**

I AM



# NO. Color. NO. History.

*By Kenyonte*

Sometimes I wish judgment didn't exist

People value those things that have little to no value in life

The goal is to understand a person for who they are

No doubts; don't predict

Generational suffering has made us succumb to oppression

Longing to be liberated from our ancestors' transgressions.

Sometimes I wish THEY would just SEE.

See me for who I AM.

Not what they made me out to be.

See me as Dignity & Integrity

Respect & Honesty

Love & Hope

Because hopefully our minds will stop being overlooked by people who

don't matter, but have influence on what happens.

BLACK – is Beauty

Being BLACK – is an Honor

We Come from Bloodlines of Royalty

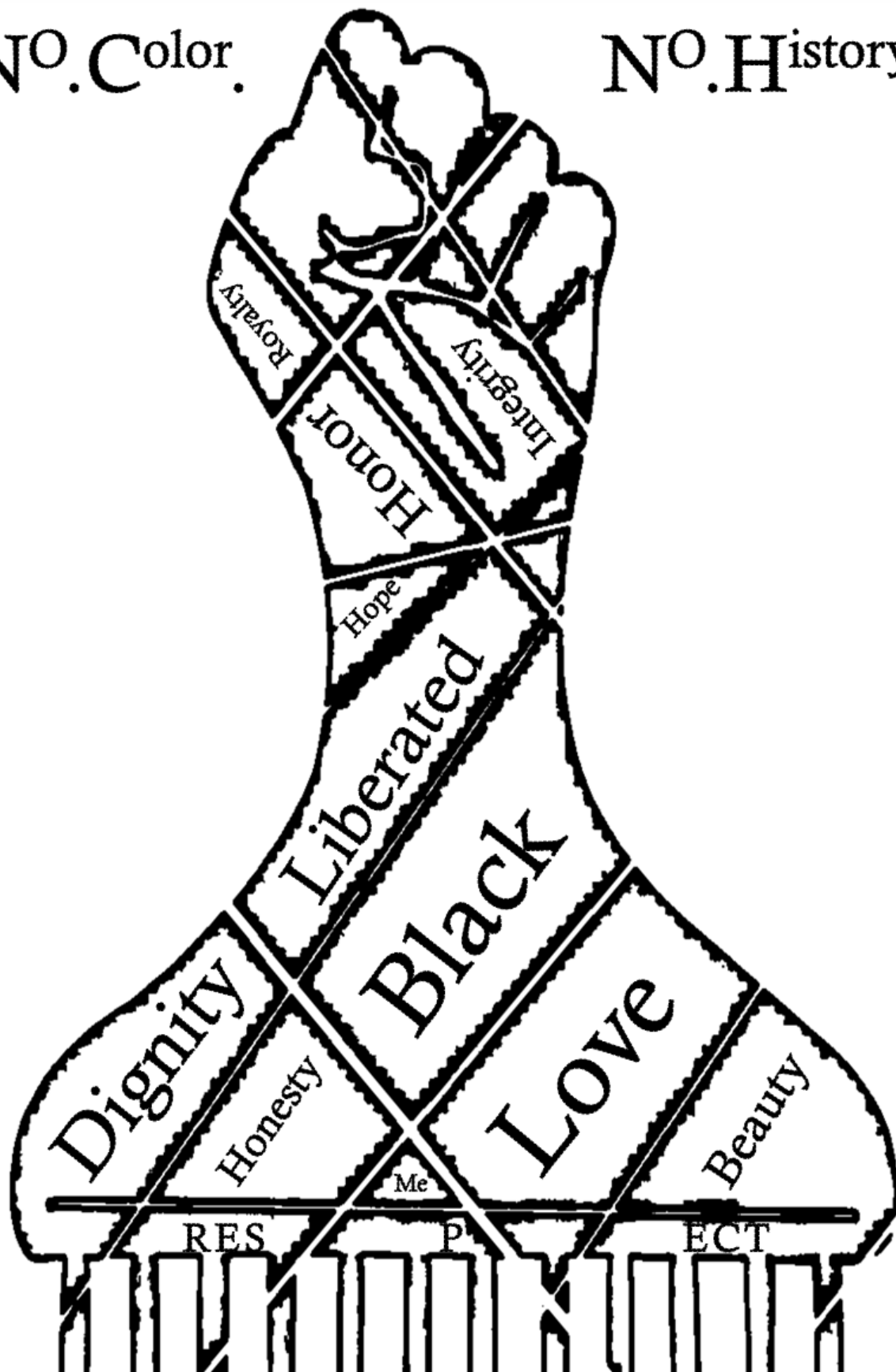
History in the making only play with our consciousness

Maybe, one day we'll get what

They Promised...

N<sup>o</sup>.Color.

N<sup>o</sup>.History.



# Peace, Harmony

By Jessica Tovey

To those who have wronged me,  
I love you

And to those that I have wronged,  
I love you...

For when you don't love me,  
I love you

And for when you don't love me,  
I love me

And for when you don't love you  
I love you

<sup>1</sup>...Love is the Revolution...Love is the Antibody...Love is the Vaccine...

What does liberation look like to you?  
To me, it's a world we have not seen yet  
One where I love you, and you love me

And I love you  
Even when you don't love me

And I love me  
Even when you don't love me

And I love you  
Even when you don't love you

...Love is the Revolution...

And I love you  
When you don't love me

And I love me  
When you don't love me

And I love you  
When you don't love you

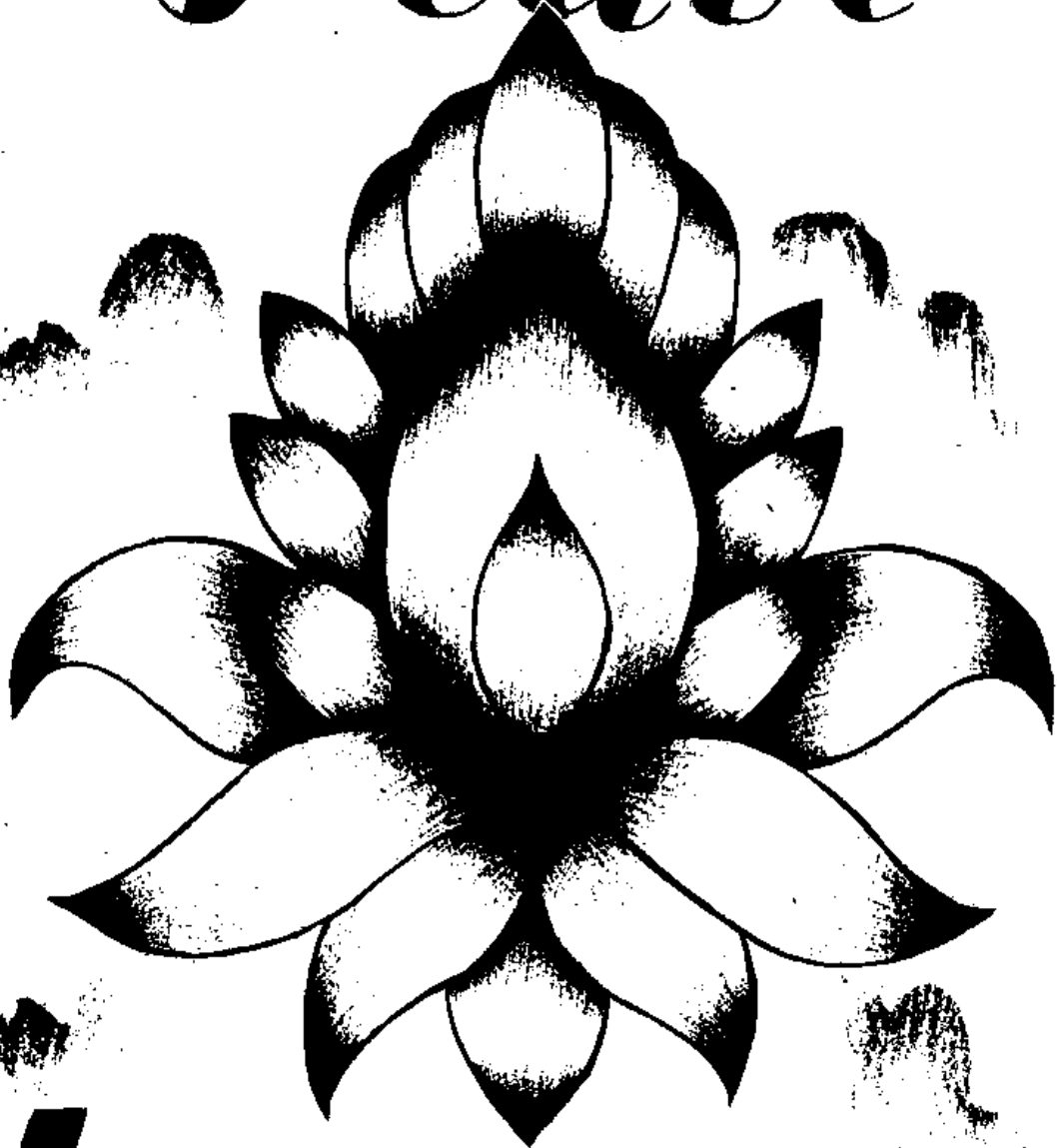
And maybe that's how it should be  
To show empathy  
And to show humanity

I'm dreaming of a world, we haven't even seen yet.

---

<sup>1</sup> The lines "Love is the Revolution" "Love is the Antibody" and "Love is the Vaccine" are from the artwork of artist activist Halim Flowers

*Peace*



*hourmony*

# “Allure”

*By Kenyonte*

Have you ever met a person & every time you're  
in their presence your mind becomes stagnant  
& your heart beats rapid?

Make you just wanna take that chance,  
that opportunity, that risk  
That quiet package where you just dying  
to know what's inside

That dose that you need prescribed  
Those pills I can't take one at a time  
I want them all &  
if I overdose on you  
let that be my call

I really hate the fact you're so enticing  
When you crossed my line of vision  
I saw gigantic birds & bees  
lions with wings

How more enchanting can you be  
I'm playing tug of war with your brain  
but when I pull I just want you to release  
and lay your thoughts at my feet

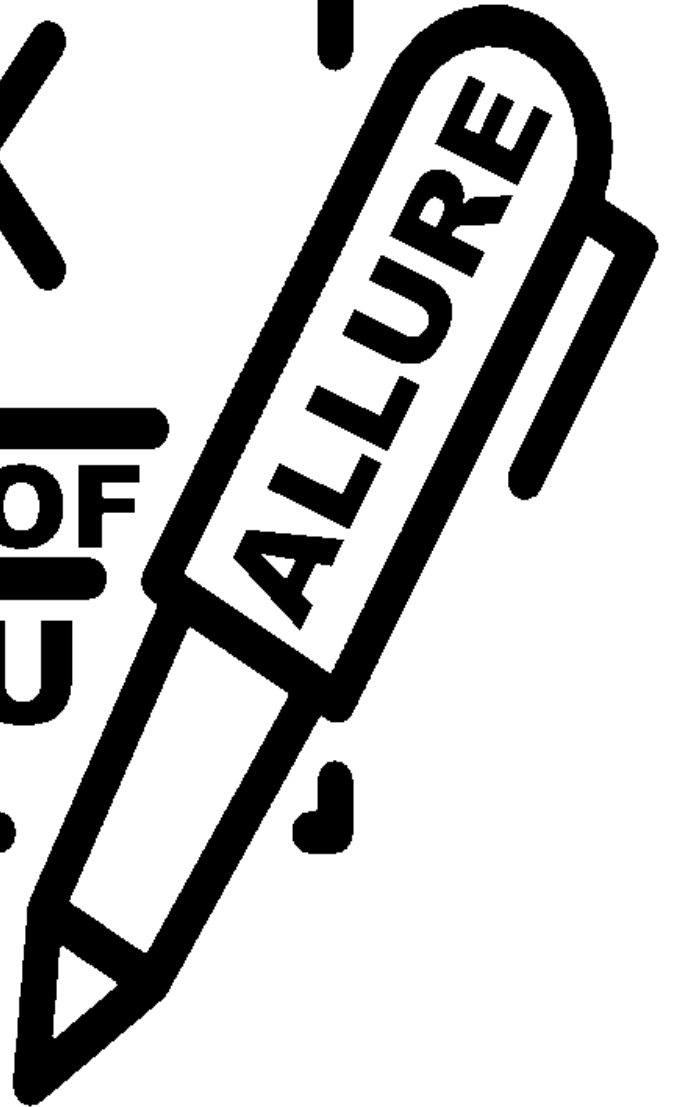
When I look at you, I would rather  
my eyes dried up and bleed  
because I'll be missing a valuable fraction  
of a second  
If I blinked

Have you ever just been Impressed  
By a person so complex?  
Or just wishing it was all a dream?  
Damn, I really hate the fact you're  
so enticing - to me...



Rx

ALL OF  
YOU



# I'M STILL LEARNING HOW TO LOVE

*By Antoine*

Being a strong Black man that sits in front of you today, I can admit that it's taken decades of time for me to actually say what I'm going to say

**I'm still learning how to love.**

At first, I felt mad, angry, I was stubborn and ignorant to it all, not realizing how deep rooted the pain and abuse was. I was oblivious to it all.

**I'm still learning how to love.**

How could I constantly continue to hurt and pain myself, if I don't find ways to heal and mend these emotions, all I'm going to do is end up hating myself.

**I'm still learning how to love.**

After breaking myself down mentally, spiritually and emotionally, I had to tell myself (SELF) something's not right. This aint how shit's suppose to be.

**I'm still learning how to love.**

As I searched for these emotions no matter where it was or what I had to do, I came to the realization that this love thang aint easy to do.

**I'm still learning how to love.**

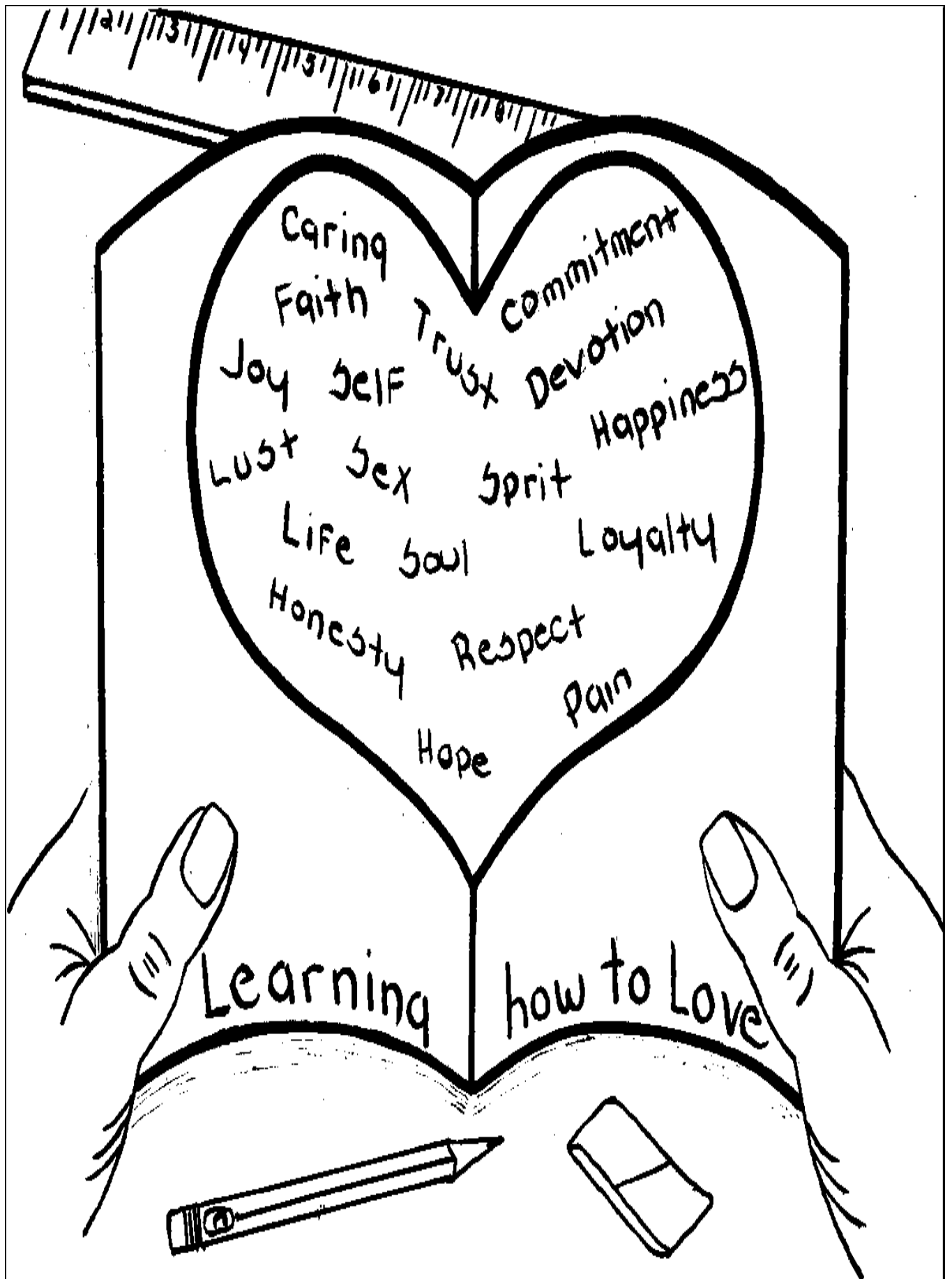
At first I wasn't trying to hear shit she was saying, I pushed and shoved back so hard I actually missed what she was saying, not until I took time to listen with heart a different side of me came out. I actually heard what she was saying.

**I'm still learning how to love.**

When I mentioned the word love most think of the word intimately, yeah everybody needs love or wants to be loved, that's how we all think it should be. This beautiful word love that I seek and yearn for, is for no other than the man that stands before you, Antoine David Stallings, that's me!!!

**I'm still learning how to love.**

Learn to love yourself everyone.



Caring  
Faith  
Joy  
Lust  
Life  
Honesty  
Hope  
Trust  
Sex  
Soul  
Respect  
Devotion  
Sprit  
Loyalty  
Pain

Learning how to Love

# Our Cross to Bear

*By Shishy and Jessica*

I see you standing there

Humanities dualities are our cross to bear

I am you and you are me

Black and White has now turned Grey

Meanwhile others see some as prey

I reflect upon my own thoughts

Judgments cast now falling by the wayside

We are all victims of circumstance

We begin as a fetus

Like a piece of dust in the wind

Our little ones watch and learn

What will we pass on in return?

## **A prayer for those incarcerated:**

*May the wind be at your back*

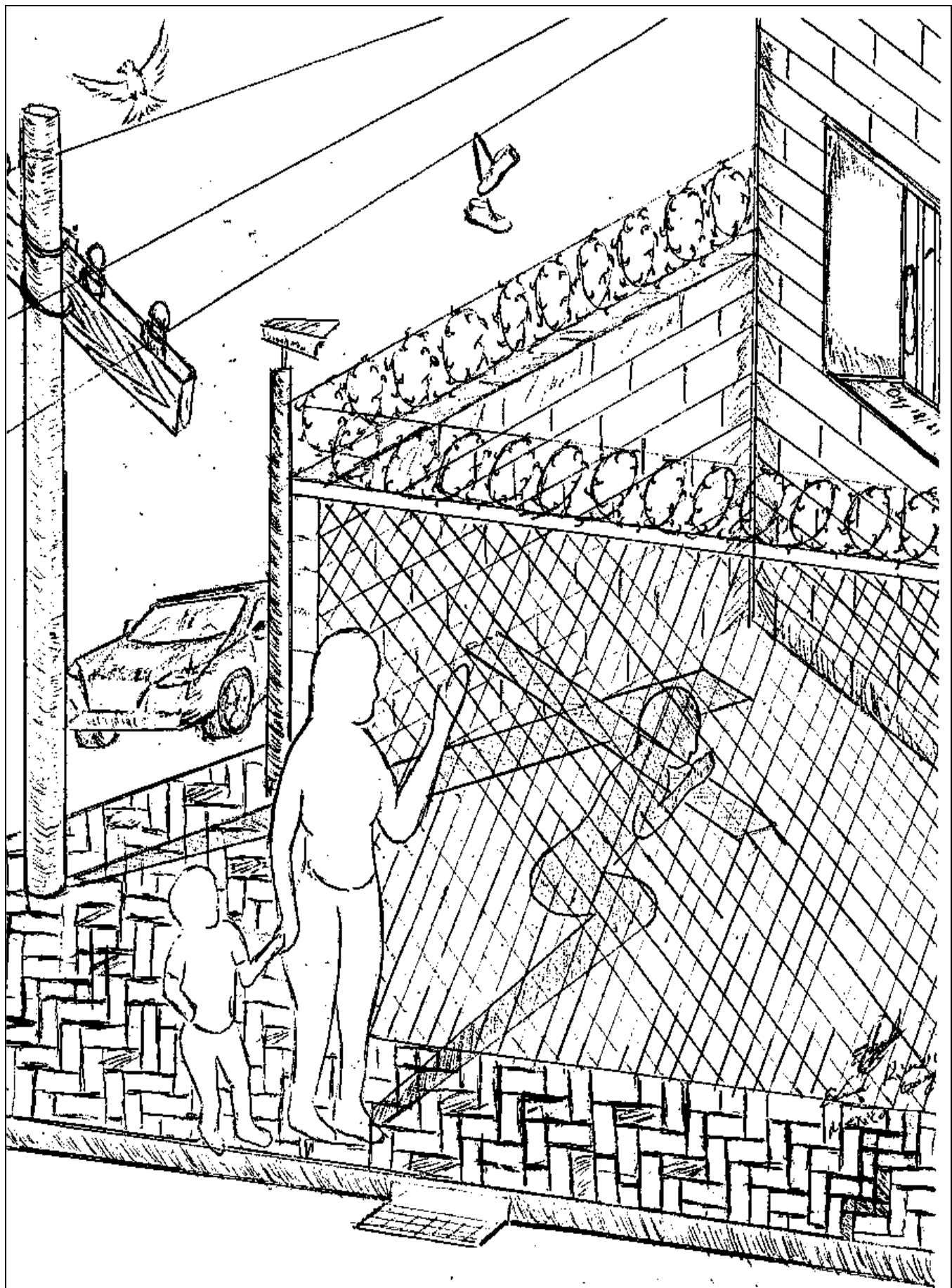
*May the birds sing your song*

*May you love yourself when others don't*

*May you feel empowered through art*

*May your voices be heard*

*May you feel our love for your humanity*



# Wall and Thorns

*by Matt Flynn*

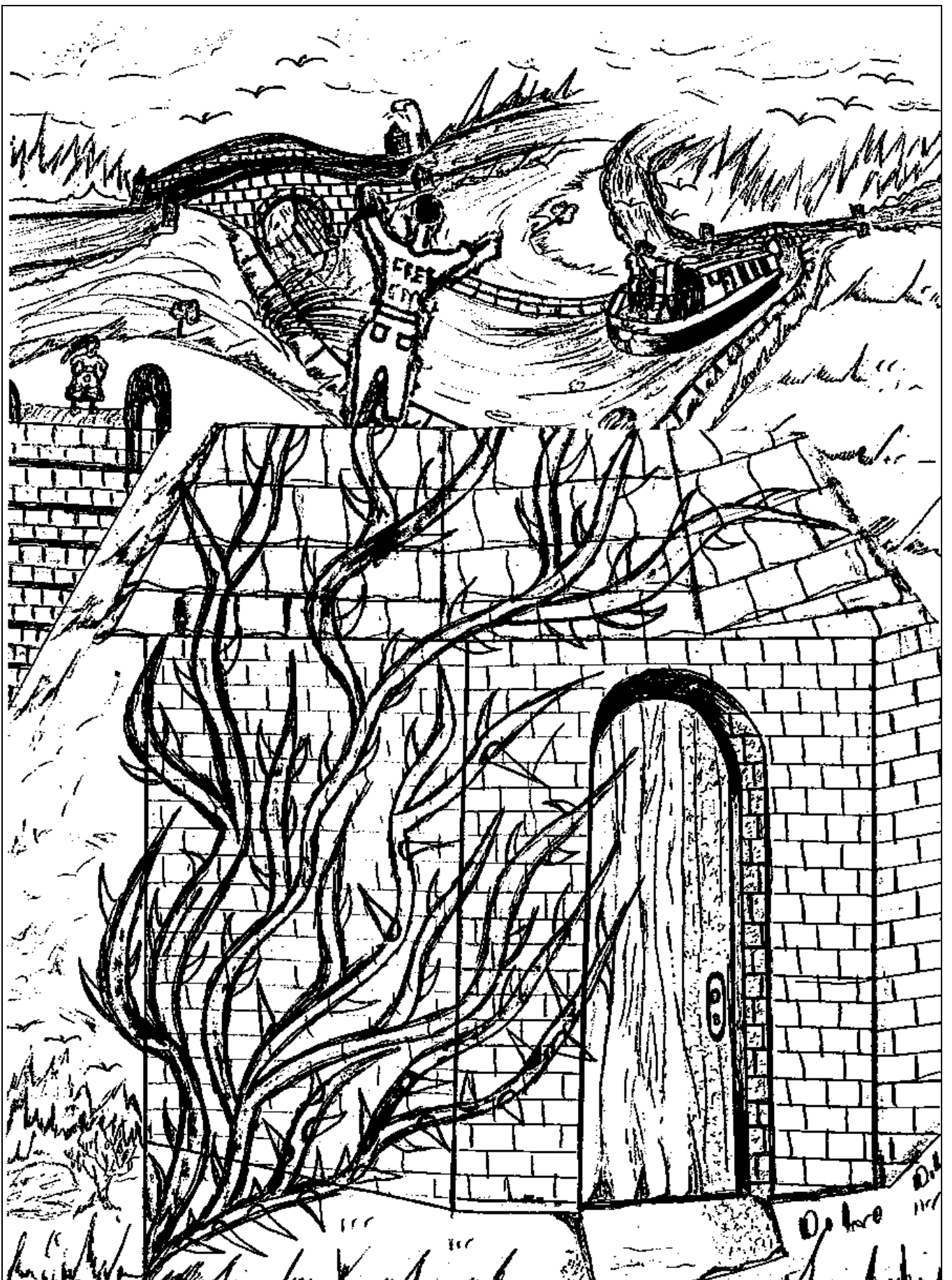
Tangled thorns that climb thick walls,  
Paths sown by hardened hands,  
with fallen buds that long since closed,  
confining dreams with solitude.

What hope can bloom within sharp walls,  
To distinguish truth from fear,  
and find a voice that is our own,  
a path to dreams so near.

A hidden painter in a dusky room.  
A dreamer for posterity.  
What wonders he could form,  
And encourage thorns to bloom.

Whose dreams are not of barren branches.  
Not found on others' vines,  
But on the branch that he will choose,  
That leads us on from solitude.

Through tangled dreams and pedals spread,  
from thorny vines on hard brick walls,  
behold the one embracing you,  
A rose with thorns behind.



# "I Spy"

I spy with my little eye  
A spirited car that likes to drive

Carrying people - their feelings and thoughts and physical selves  
In a moving box, secured with seatbelts

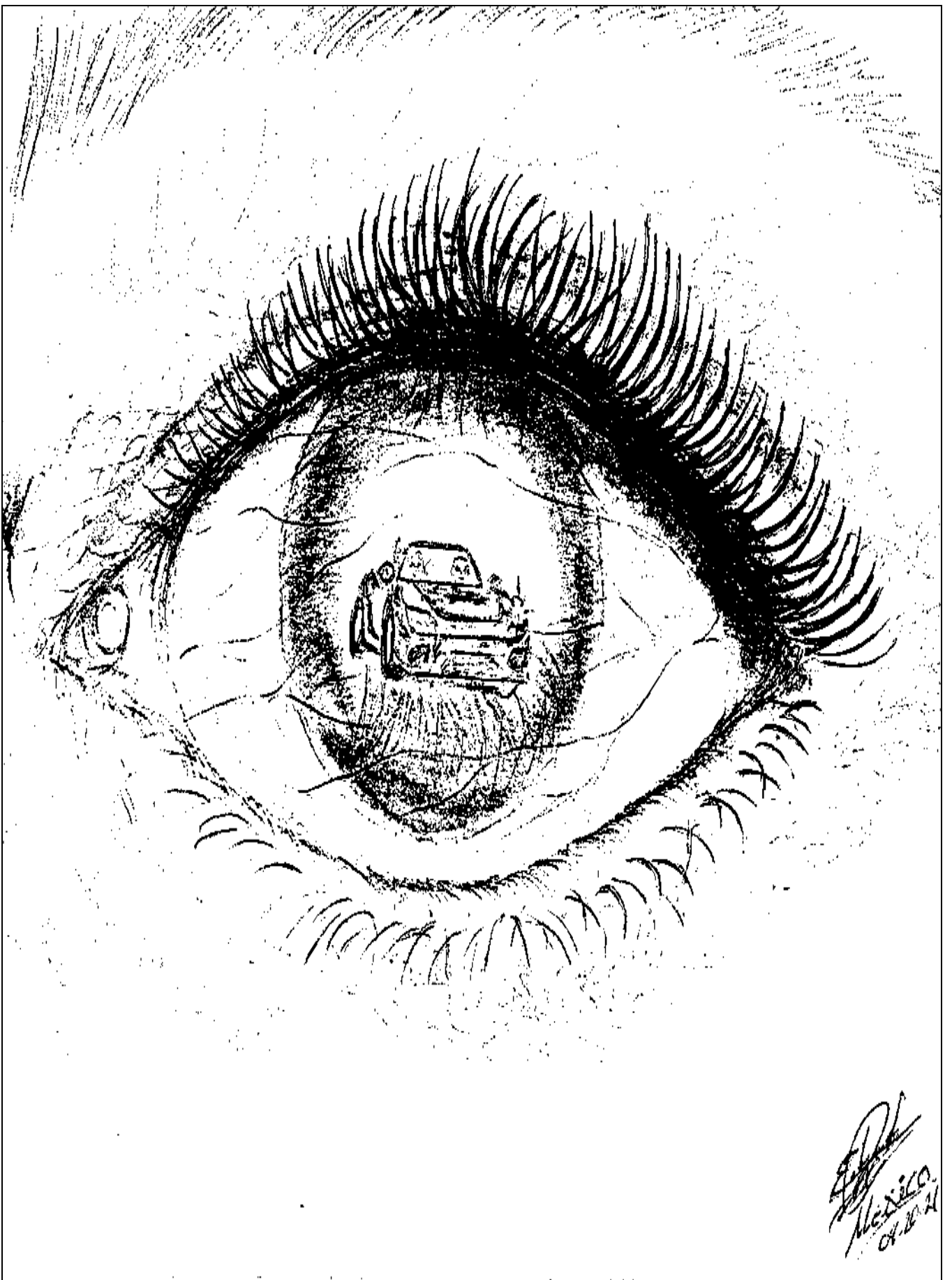
I spy with my little eye  
A spirited car that likes to drive

Traveling for miles upon miles across desert and city and roads that wind  
Taking passengers to destinations of every kind

I spy with my little eye  
A spirited car that likes to drive

- Grace





*[Signature]*  
Mexico  
07.02.24

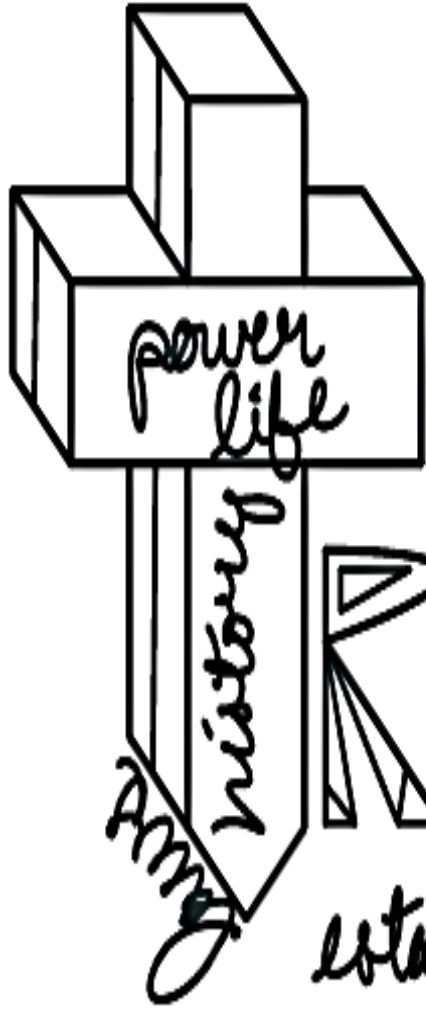
# DECLARATION

By Kenyonte

*in the Course of human Events,*  
*of Nature's God*  
*unalienable Rights*  
*becomes destructive*  
*Foundation on*  
*Happiness.*  
*themselves*  
*and*  
*He has refused*  
*forbidden*  
*Assent*  
*He*  
*Right of Representation*  
*called*  
*opposing*  
*prevent the Population*  
*the Administration of Justice*  
*alone*  
*kept*  
*Times*  
*Standing*  
*without*  
*Acts of*  
*States:*  
*on us*  
*For*  
*the System*  
*in the Course of human Events,*  
*of Nature's God*  
*Truths to be self-evident*

*the Powers of the Earth,*  
*Mankind requires*  
*are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness*  
*Principles, and*  
*Experience hath shewn, that Mankind*  
*Design to reduce*  
*to alter*  
*Security*  
*a candid World.*  
*and*  
*to*  
*them.*  
*pass*  
*Legislative Bodies*  
*the Rights of the People.*  
*Legislative Powers*  
*for Naturalization*  
*of Lands.*  
*harass our People,*  
*Civil Power*  
*, and*  
*Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these*  
*Benefits of*  
*the System*  
*the Powers of the Earth,*  
*Mankind requires*

*the Laws of Nature and*  
*Government*  
*to institute new Government*  
*to effect their Safety and*  
*suffer*  
*to right*  
*of Abuses*  
*Usurpations*  
*Duty*  
*of Colonies and*  
*History of the*  
*Establishment of*



grants moral  
rights mankind



disciplines  
PODDLES

establishment

alter  
altar  
evidence

# "Meaning Behind Tears"

*By Kenyonte*

Caught in our own prolific source of troubles

Pandora's Box

Left to face all those heavy loads

## ***With Self***

People & Things close to you by nature

Starts the weeping

Whether it's anger, heartbreak, or lost

Joy, accomplishments, or wealth

Doesn't help us to understand our lucid feelings

Minds deter from meaning

## ***Self loses logic***

And opens an emotional tidal wave

Whose crash landing is the eyes

So many situations cries to be redacted

No one's ready for the reconciliation

## ***of self***

We ignore the inhabitable part of our feelings & emotions

to seek refuge elsewhere.

***Cry.***

Cry

Accomplishments

Troubles

*of Self*

Joy

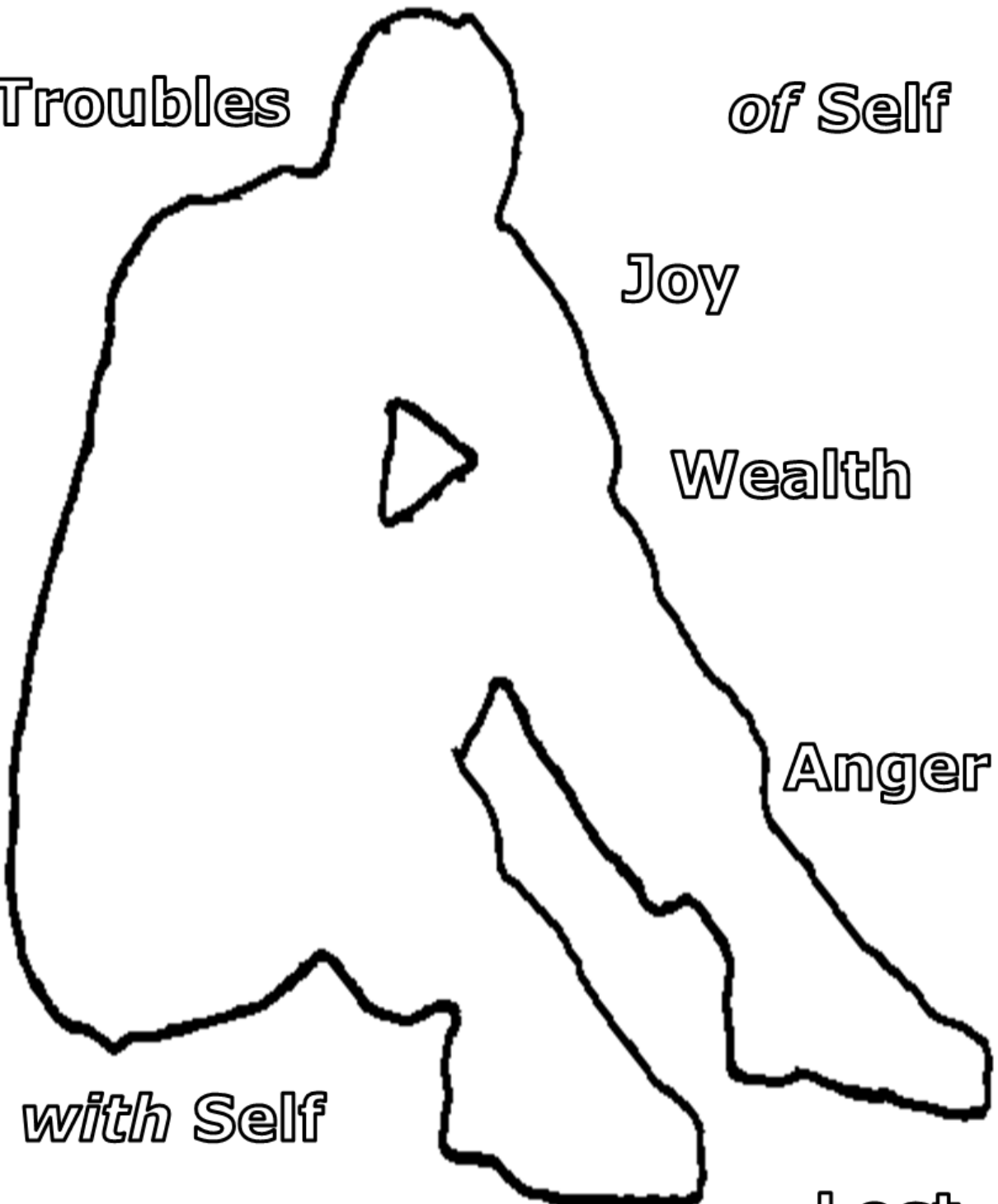
Wealth

Anger

*with Self*

Heartbreak

Lost



# WHAT A JOB

*By Mark*

Finally retiring after 35 years —

long days and nights; blood sweat and tears.

I'm just walking away — got no 401k.

I don't get a pension or an honorable mention.

I'm turning the page, a new chapter in my life,

Free from worry, stress and endless strife.

If I ever get lonely and you come to mind,

I'll quickly remember what I'm leaving behind...

The chaos, the hustle, the day to day grind;

It's a job like no other, truly one of a kind.

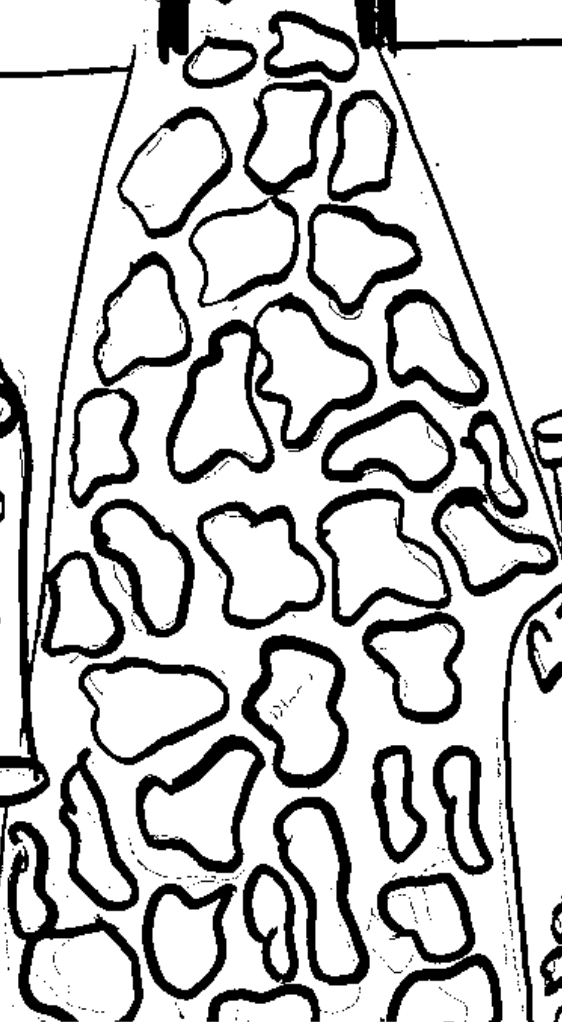
I take one last look, because there's no coming back.

Well, that could all change if I just smoke some crack.

Retired from criminal work.

# Liberation

"Don't Let The Wounds  
of Yesterday Bleed  
Into Today" on



Steve  
1976

# **“Choices”**

*By Walter*

**It's something that only we can make for ourselves.**

**We might take opinions and advices from others,**

**But no one else can make them for us.**

**Only we have the power to make them.**

**Every day that we get up, we're faced with choices.**

**We can do good; we can do bad.**

**The choices are our responsibility.**

**Make the right choice today.**



# Finding Yourself

*By Walter*

I was lost.

I was lost within myself and I didn't even know it;

That was the worst part.

I knew something was going wrong with my life.

Everything was starting to feel wrong,

And I didn't even understand that I was lost

For so long everyone was seeing me as...

I don't know what word you want to use...

Lost self?

Whatever it was they were seeing me as,

I was starting to see myself the same way.

I was becoming a lost soul in my own eyes...

And then I realized all I ever wanted to do was to:

Love every minute of my life;

Love people, so I can be loved back;

Make music;

Do the right things in life.

I don't think I had even sat down and thought about it before,

Because my life was going fast.

But, I finally realized I am what I make out of my self

And, what I am is a man with beautiful dreams, and that's all I am.

And, when I realized that, it made me happy; it made me relieved.

Because none of the other things matter.

# *Freedom*

*By Michael*

*What is freedom to you?*

*For me, sometimes I feel trapped and caged in from the color of my skin  
From someone judging me all the way to the pen;  
The DA lying, setting me up again.  
They say innocent until proven guilty.  
But, if you're Black they'll put a twist or turn so you can't win.*

*What is freedom to you?*

*Is it getting out of jail, going to school, getting a job so you can buy some food.  
Coming home to watch the news just to hear another White cop killed a Black  
person, and lying saying he was acting like a fool*

*What is freedom to you?*

*Is it being in the streets homeless, getting another fix,  
Is it the fact that you're always in the mix,  
Or do you think it's cool, because you're pimping out your girl to turn another  
trick,*

*What is freedom to you?*

*Is it getting money from the trap.  
Laying n\*\*\*\*z down face flat.  
Or getting drunk on the block,  
Giving your homies dap.*

*What is freedom to you?*

*Is it having s\*\* with a sexier shape than your girl.  
Is it the fact she rocks your world.  
Or because she has Chinese eyes and her hair got curls.*

*What is freedom to you?*

# “Flame”

*By Kenyonte*

My Soul Burns

I had to go in a zone & take my mind  
somewhere I didn't want it to go.

A lot of good people, lessons learned,  
& morality's built come from my violent lifestyle

But Death.

that silent echo

that shiver when its not cold

that seeking for a lost soul

Yea that constant reminder that somewhere I went wrong

My inability to think past a situation

My thirst for retaliation kept leading me to an unwanted vacation

Then Lil Pat died – D Lo died – Ger died – Fazo died – Trill died – Pumpkin died

& Bennie & Jalen got kilt by our own guys

Tragedies in my violent lifestyle only

disaster come behind

the tears wont come from my eyes

but my heart keep cryin'

& when my body decline my mind rewinds

& you couldn't possibly take in the graphic things I've seen

If I unleashed these memories, it'll be like a horrific dream

I've penetrated my environment to the roots

now I'm watchin' the next generation do the same thing

destroy my hood

Reincarnating me as much as they could

Everybody thinkin' its for the greater good

Few understand Pain & Suffering

God only knows the agony I feel

the misery for years

Gave me that urge to...

Gave me an urge to do things you wouldn't  
possible think

Now I want change

So I practice saying Salam

to keep the peace in my inner being

to keep the beast from intervening

I know you don't understand because these are some

things I neglected to tell you about me

Now I'm watching people I grew to love lose their

Life from my so called divine decree

& Now. I. Just. Want. Change.

# “PANDEMIC”

*By Tyrone*

Fighting cases, I'm still innocent they treat me like I'm guilty,  
Had a visit with my daughter ain't wanna hold her I felt filthy,  
How they lock me up for charges; it was him that tried to kill me,  
Told my lawyer you ain't locked up don't be acting like you feel me,  
Baby mamma cheated on me I still treat her like she family,  
I stopped praying for a while cause I felt God ain't really hear me,  
Feel like I was just talking to myself; in the trenches I be dolo,  
I be walking by myself,  
I ain't greedy when they look out, cause I always been without,  
Taking meds cuz I was crazy; I don't feel like that shit helped,  
And they mad I live this way, but this the hand that I was dealt,  
Caught Covid in the hole and no one knew I couldn't smell,  
Tyarei getting older by the days I'm in the cell,  
I'm held indefinite,  
Think I still got Covid I been sweating it,  
My heart keep on racing, Nurse keep checking it,  
D.A. trying to make jail my residence,

# Letter to the Warden

By Dashawn

*Today marks another day of my incarceration. Another day that days are no longer mine. That my destiny is no longer certain like the scheduled meals that are digested. Today feels like yesterday as well as my tomorrow. Time goes by but yet I feel like everything is at a standstill, even if I stand still I am still ...here. Caged beyond my control causes occasional tears that never end and keep one closed off those you love - these four walls have become my friends. My toilet is my sink in which I most despise. They say jail preserves you I say it preserves our demise. Ever dreamed of being free and it all felt so real? To awaken in this nightmare, but this is not Elm street, no , welcome to Nash. Where the state soap ain't about \*\*\*\*, and the water will give you a rash. Where they raise prices on canteen rather than raise our spirits, where the more beds we fill we raise their profits, so now we can't raise our children, too busy raising their wallets. "You do this for me?" "the program?" "don't want me back?" yeah I hear it if crime stops so does your money so I know you don't mean it. You let power go to your head, mentally it defeats you, let's switch places for a day and see how different I treat you, rush to your aid as quick as you rush to lug me. I bet I won't be as quick to hate you no quicker than you'd choose to love me.*

# My Name is "Major"

By Dashawn

My name is Major

I am of greater importance to find my mental state;  
you'll need the coordinates.

I am love.

I am strength to my world and my subordinates.

I go where hate can't lay in exuberance.

I spread courage anywhere that fear might stay.

I am the voice that tells you it's OK.

On this quest, I've come across some questions like,  
why do we live and think like we got one choice?

*or*

since we all saying the same thing in different ways,  
is that what Donkor meant when he said one voice, yes?

I am cold, but sharp like ice that sickles.

Like how can you see yourself clear in water that ripples?

How could you die for the "set" when they don't live for you?

*or*

How did it feel to find out that the "hood" don't miss you?

This new generation, they won't miss you,

'cause they don't know us,.

We walk around thinking it's the world that owes us;

come to this place to find out that it is us that owes us.

In dept with self, in the depth of self we are demons fighting our demons.

So, are we really fighting ourselves?

No, we're lost Angels fighting demons known as the Commonwealth.

Some of us get so mad we get hot 'till we melt.

Others, still little boys inside screaming for help.

Mama dead or daddy gone?

*or*

both out.

Feel double wronged?

I know that tune too well, 'cause I played that song

I understand your feelings, 'cause I've looked in your soul

when you talk and don't stare at the ceiling.

I am acceptance and understanding of pain, that is

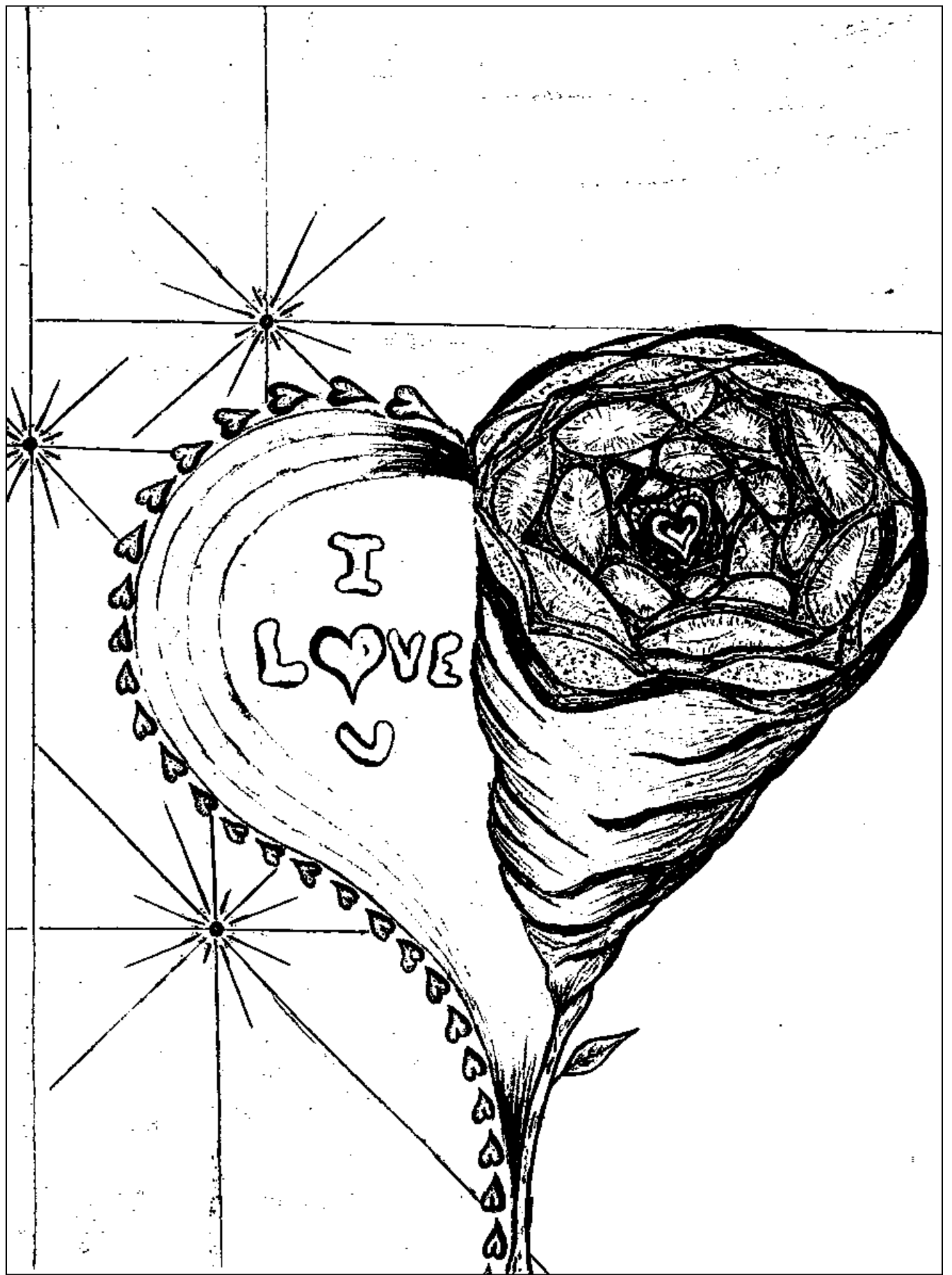
All and all, that is pain.

I am "looney", I am "major" I am "little to gain"

not a little Duval,

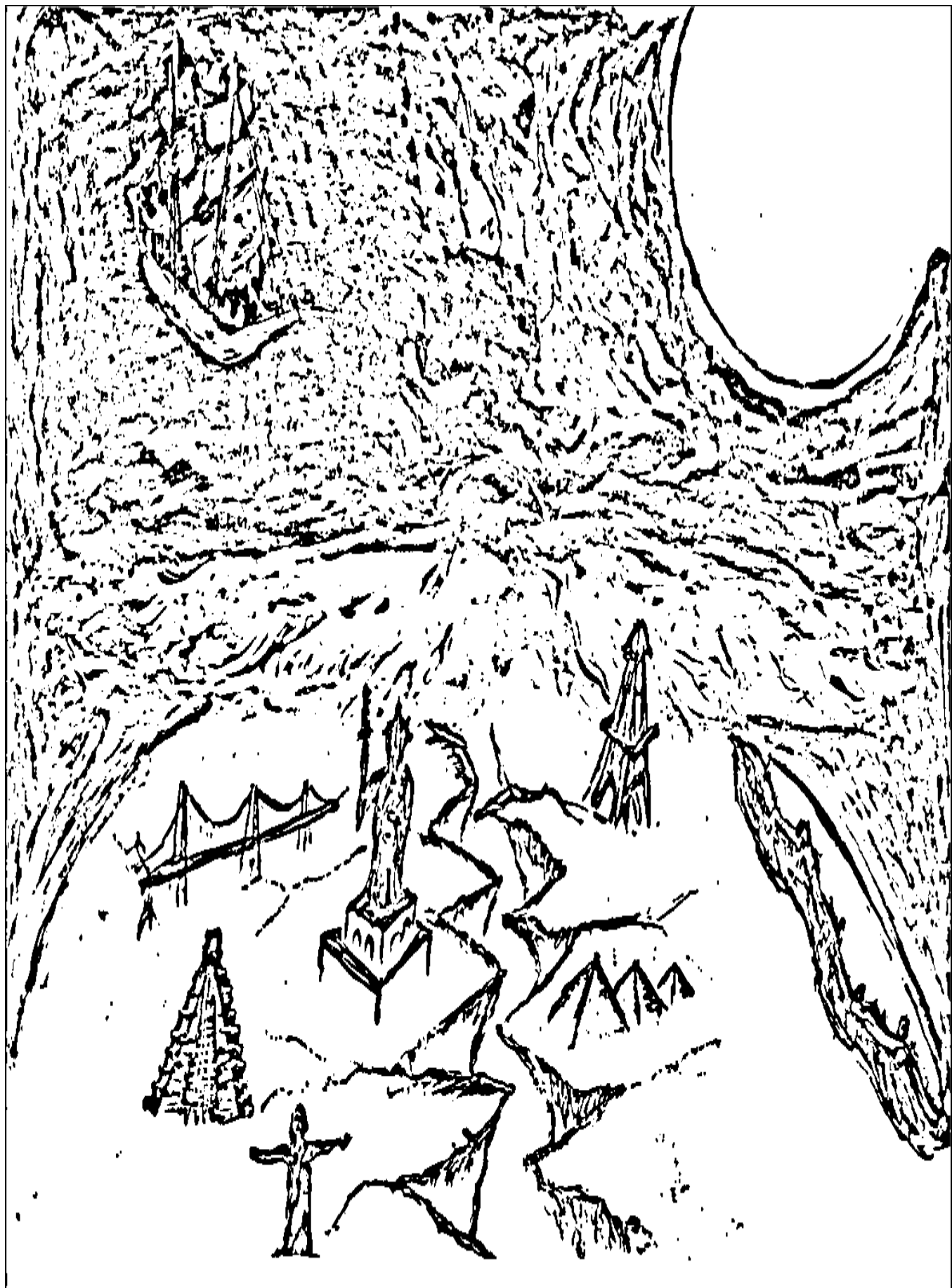
but today I escape these walls in my head,

I am Andy Duphrane

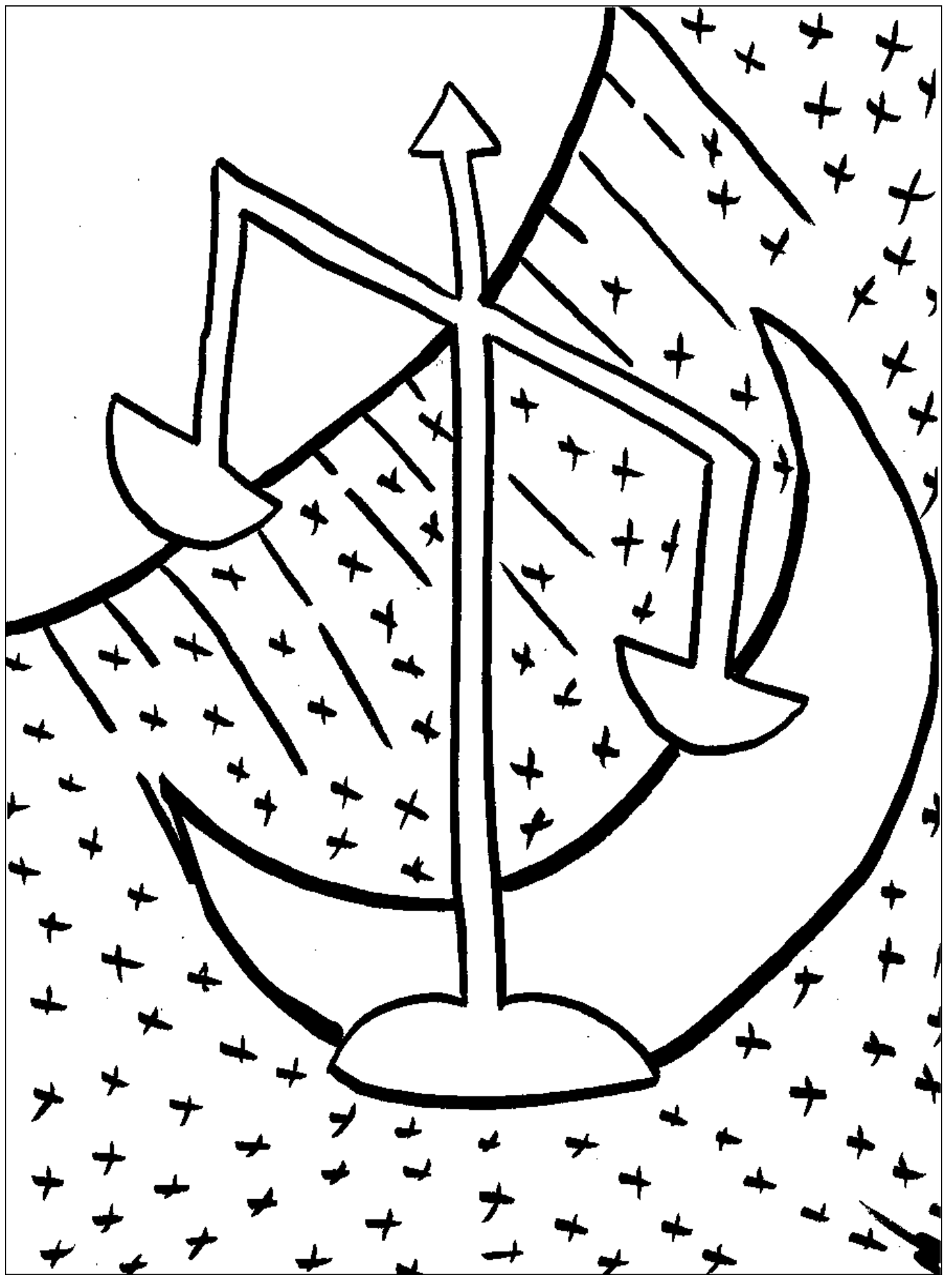


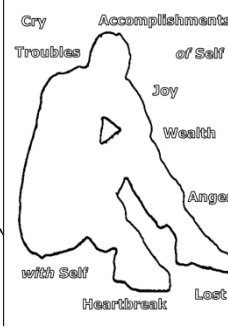
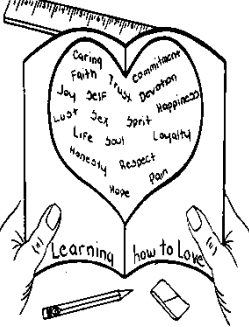
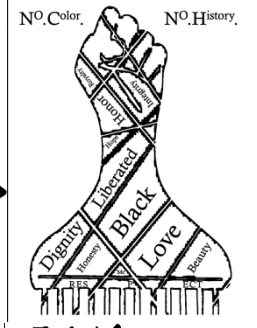
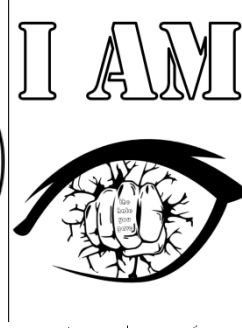
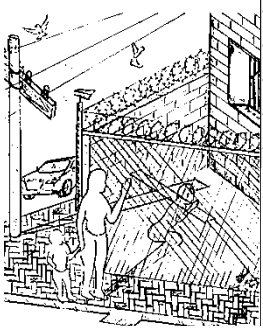
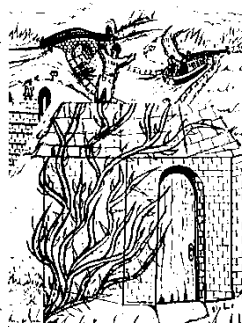
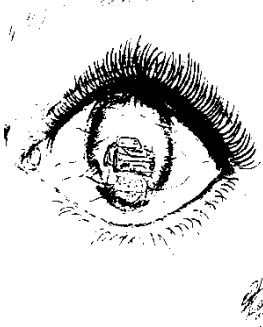
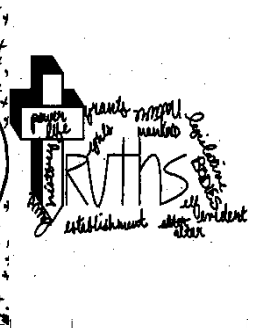
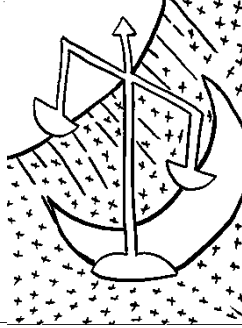












# BELOVED ARTS