

ISSUE #6

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INSIDE OUT

A JOURNAL OF INCARCERATED THOUGHT

I fear going up in a cloud of smoke.

I fear dying, and no one knows who I was.

I fear dying without accomplishing enough,
that the memory of me gets lost in the dimensions of time.

I fear my presence not meaning anything
a century from now...like I didn't count.

I fear my life not being a measurement of time.
Whatever my life's purpose is, I not only wanna be
remembered for excelling in that capacity,
but held as an example forever for it.

Like...you can't mention the pursuit I
dedicated my life to without mentioning me!
How I changed and revolutionized whatever it is.

I fear my name having no legacy behind it.
I fear not having a monumental effect on the entire world!

Time not withstanding the history of my life.

I fear not touching the entire planet, universe,
the future...forever.

I fear infinity itself.

Legacy Forgotten, Bruno Mamwalee

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Or do we continue

By Naquan Leckie

It is The Dreams you create today
That leave Behind your legacy.
For your legacy is of the Dreams you create.

Being created man or woman is a
Legacy itself, but what's Next?
Do we stop there? Or do we continue
To Rise like water in an overflowing river?
So deep that we will be Amazed at
The treasure Hidden Beneath.

Would we risk it all to Establish And Create
something that will be remembered or
do we Just Exist without any Justification
As to Who We Are And our Reason for Existing?

Success is not Remembered, it only establishes
That you're at the peak of your Existence.
Greatness is existence of its own
Whether Past Present or Future.

Which one will you choose?

Those Was My Freedom Days

By Donald Shane Lee

I see life differently, like when
Adam and Eve ate the apple off the tree.

I was deceived by people who don't believe
that they could get murdered in the first degree
or end up in a penitentiary doing centuries.
I ask the Lord, is this meant for me?
If not, how can I change my destiny?

I used to have a lot of doubt in me.
And doubt, that's why I get high,
to escape reality, to be in a different galaxy.

But that escape is temporarily,
I be back momentarily,
doing the same thing: the definition of insanity.

I'm insane like a person with no brains.
My middle name should be Shame
because of the way I used to go back to the same
things like going back to the block to sell 'caine
to get recognition from lames
that barely know their names.

I have a brother named James and
we are practically the same,
so I have to change
to show him a different way
before he end up locked in a cage
or buried in a grave.

I was trapped in a maze,
ended up getting grazed because
I was stacking chips like Lay's.

But those was my freedom days,
now I'm locked up like a slave,
thinking of ways to change.

So now I write to express myself,
so I can see better days.

In Search of Fear

By Keith Wiggins

“Fear is the main source of superstition, and one of the main sources of cruelty. To conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom.”

-Bertrand Russell

Sitting at one of five tables in a dayroom of the Brooklyn House of Detention, I was given the opportunity to submit a story, essay, or poem on fear. I was given writing paper and a flimsy straw filled with blue ink attached to a pen tip. After my neighboring cellmate crafted a pen by wrapping the straw with paper using a sticker off the fruit from chow, I went to my sixty-six by seventy-eight inch cell to start my composition.

What is my greatest fear?

Growing up, I've never been the biggest guy around. Currently standing at five-foot-six, 170 pounds, the biggest I've ever been, I still find myself being one of the smallest in a crowd. By no means do I think I'm "Big Billy Badass," but regardless of my physical size, I fear no man, as he sheds

blood like I shed blood. Therefore, there's not a damn thing to be scared of when it comes to another person. So the question remains unanswered. What is my greatest fear?

I put down the paper and innovatively homemade pen. To ease my mind and provide warmth against the chill radiating off the cold bars of my cell, I decided to make a cup of tea before laying on my cot. I sat with my back and head upon the wall, pleased by the aroma of Egyptian chamomile I'm drinking, mixed with the scent of kush coming from a couple of cells down, overpowering the stench of urine from deep inside the stainless steel pissing pot.

I closed my eyes and began to ponder. The back of my eyelids became a road map I followed on a journey, touring through every time I remember being an eyewitness to fear.

My second youngest sister, youngest at the time, was terrified of hair. Yes, hair, like she had on the top of her head. I remember my cousin used to mess with her by throwing my grandmother's wig in her path, sending her into a panicked frenzy. After getting a little kick of laughter at my baby sis, thinking this will in no way, shape, or form answer my question, I move on to a time I remember personally experiencing fear.

I was no older than seven, one sunny afternoon day, and my mother, two sisters, and I were taking a nap. When I awoke, my sisters still asleep, I remember my mom having a conversation with a familiar face—I can't think of whom—and I overheard that my grandfather, who owned the house and lived in the basement, had been shot in the head and killed.

So much ran through my young brain. Who shot him? Why? How come we didn't hear it? Most importantly, I thought of the fact that we all could've died as well.

Later that day, the police left and everyone cleared the scene. My uncle, built like a bouncer and, to me, a giant of some sort, stayed the night, providing a sense of security

and comfort, I guess. At midnight, I vividly remember waking up thirst and going to the kitchen to pour a glass of water. As the water flowed out of the pitcher, something urged me to look behind myself. I turned around to see my grandfather standing there in the kitchen with me.

I seized up, everything absolutely still for one whole second, until his lips separated from each other as if he was fixing to speak. But before he uttered a sound, I dropped everything and took off running through the house, jumping over my uncle, who was laying on the floor asleep. I screamed the whole way through, as if I was being chased by the devil himself.

I can't remember exactly what happened after that, but I do remember someone eventually told me that the visit from my dead grandfather supposedly meant he wanted to tell me something before his spirit left the earth.

Well I did not know that at the time. I was gone. The fear was soon replaced by a slight sense of regret, wishing I would've stayed to receive his message.

I pried my eyes open to take a sip from my green plastic cup of now-lukewarm tea. After my lips broke contact with the beverage, I placed the cup down and closed my eyes, continuing my journey in search for fear until I arrived at a dark place, where I can recall my mother telling me she was at war with cancer.

Let me take a brief second to express something about my mother. She is my rock, my ace, my queen, and the glue that held me together for all 27 years of my life. Regardless of the number of fights, arguments, or disagreements we might've had, and how independent I might be, there is not a day, hour, minute, or second I can say that lady did not have my back and my best interest at heart and mind.

After losing my stepfather—who is one of the reasons I am the humble, understanding man and loving father I am today—to a motorcycle accident, the thought of losing my

mother or anyone else in my family horrified me. Although my mother did win her battle with cancer, just the thought twists my stomach in a tight-ass knot, tears escaping from my eyelids. I mean, this is the strongest woman, no, fuck that, the strongest person I've ever known.

But I understand that death is a part of life. John 3:16 reads, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life." My mom, being a Christian woman, believes in Jesus. Therefore, I am not afraid to believe that she will someday be one of the lucky ones to make it to a better place. This feeling is not fear, but instead extreme difficulty for me to bear.

I then come to think about my children, my two little princesses, how they are growing up so fast. With time flying and me in a cell, I begin to wonder: without their provider, rider, guider, and most importantly, their father, will they make it in this cold world full of hatred, sexism, and racism? What if they don't?

Without their provider, rider, guider, and most importantly, their father, will my daughters make it in this cold world full of hatred, sexism, and racism? What if they don't?

Boom, just like that, fear drops on me.

Boom, just like that, fear drops on me.

What if they fall victim to the evils of this world? Did I do all I possibly could to adequately prepare them? I find no good, definitive answer to these questions. I am beyond sure I have found my true fear.

Earlier, I laughed at my sister's fear of hair without realizing the irony, and how funny the situation really is. This girl was terrified of hair until she learned that it was completely harmless and overcame her fear. Once afraid, she is

now a professional cosmetologist who does braids, sew-ins, weaves, the whole nine yards. Thinking back on Russell's quote, I agree: *to conquer fear is the beginning of wisdom.*

After overcoming fear, we acquire knowledge, a clearer perception of truth, and wisdom, a good sense of judgment. Wisdom and knowledge allow us to obtain a level of understanding. We tend to mistakenly fear the unknown and dread what we do not understand.

Wisdom and knowledge allow us to obtain a level of understanding. We tend to mistakenly fear the unknown and dread what we do not understand.

For example, as young children, some of us are afraid of the bogeyman in the closet or under the bed. When we grow older, we understand that the bogeyman is a figment of our imagination. We become wise enough to say he is not real at all. We are not afraid because we know we made him up.

After coming to these conclusions, I realize what I was certain was my fear was is not really my fear. My deepest fear is not that my daughters are inadequate, but that they are powerful beyond measure.

Huey P. Newton, Malcom X, and Martin Luther King Jr. are just a few great people who were silenced with death by those who feared their power, potential, and ability to make changes in our nation. How can I not fear Kiah's intelligence, Dennise's strength, both of their beauty, striking fear in the hearts of society's ignorant minds who are not wise enough to judge the positive powers of such beings? How can I not be afraid that my daughters may become targeted victims alongside those names previously stated?

Those of you with a son who could be the next Medgar Evers, or raising a daughter with the potential to be the next Malala Yousafzai, wouldn't you be afraid? ■

Legacy (A Series)

By Rasaun Bullock

L.A.

legacy admiration
to all the pioneers true, thank you
all of you, from all of us
and trust what was entrusted to us
is encrusted with intellectual dust

so it's a must, we blow it on the best of us
then push it on the rest of us
cause what was left to us, *e pluribus*
from a seed of trust
exploded a tree so plush
with branches of just what's right for us

and to you it might be plain
but to us, it's everything
and to pass it on and on anon
will go on and on anon

for as long as humanity is born
your contributions will live on
long after we're all gone

and the sense is so unique
we must rinse and repeat
to every generation we meet
it's so chic.

Literally Legacy Paused

they died so we could enjoy life
and their past worries are not even our present strife
and what they taught then
to the ones they cared about
we now no longer care to learn about

and the perpetual struggle
to free our perpetual selves
from the proverbial manacles
has proverbially switched
for we now actually struggle to chain ourselves to
actual maternal manacles or chemicals

the legend
we virtually deprioritized from
so virtually no one realize where day from
so intellectual sparks are no longer fanned
and spread like wildfire across the land
healing and nurturing geographic
sites are never explored

disclosed and posted
our geosphere ultimately wasted
what's left is now, right now, to make right now
right now

and leave for them the best of what was left for us
no matter the level of wrong we're in, do right
it won't count now
but it will count later
now leave me right...now!!!

Past Legacies Present

chain reactions to actions cause actions to reappear
to stop what's happenin, pride zappin, soul sappin
generation trappin
now pants saggin, schools lackin
disrespect-havin kids jackin, talkin bout day mackin
cause the tears and fears from years is no longer theirs

free to be dumb as could be
but you ain't hear it from me
cause actively activists be askin me what I wanna be
hyperactively I answer me me me
then imitate Malcolm, Martin, and Marcus
cause that's where my heart is, trust this
attack social injustice
like Nat Turner and Sojourner

and stay in school
cause knowledge is da hottest power
that'll never cool

my oration ah steer ah nation to da new emancipation
proclaimin everything, pro-sayin, no playin
seeing to it babies know sayings
adages added
years and influential peers and
subtracted fears and inconsequential tears

so da next time you hear
wise beyond years
know dat legacies there came from right here
now put it in da air
right there

My Brother's Keeper

By the Ghost Writer

How can I call you my brother
when all we do is snake each other

How can I call you my brother
when all we do is back-bite each other

How can I call you my brother
when we can't even have a positive conversation

How can I call you my brother
when I can't give you some positive advice

How can I call you my brother
when you dislike me and don't even know why

How can I call you my brother
when we can't even see eye-to-eye
on the smallest problems

How can I call you my brother
when you anticipate my demise

How can I call you my brother
when we can't come together
to help our other brothers in need

How can I call you my brother
when you only deal with me
when you need something

How can I call you my brother
when a stick of whatever means more to you
than your brother that needs a meal in his stomach

An Offended Reader

(A Response to ‘My Brother’s Keeper’)

By Yohan Perez

Crabs-in-the-barrel-ass niggas.
Used to be my man, now I slip,
And reach for your hand and
I only get the barrel-ass nigga.

Are you my brother’s keeper?
Or are you just an agent of oppression
Disguised as my brother?

I almost made it out of the barrel,
And then I got dragged by these crab-ass niggas.

Type of cat to hug you,
And once you walk away,
He pull his ski mask down quicker.

I really hate myself,
And I hate my woman more,
‘cuz she’s a black-ass sister.

I could get my rocks off
‘cuz Johnny Law ain’t gon’ care
if I slash black niggas.

Tell me 'Black is Beautiful,'
I might lose my mind,
And just spaz on niggas.

You say that you my brother,
But if you don't know my mother,
Then his lie just swifter.

Inside, I'm just a bitch,
An undercover coward,
And the only thing I respect
is violent-ass niggas.

If I didn't hate myself,
I could prolly look you in the eyes,
And tell you, you's a real-ass nigga.

Hate is confused admiration
for you fool-ass niggas.
So don't you try to climb up
out this barrel, dumb-ass nigga.

Cause until I love myself,
I'll forever be crab-in-the-barrel-ass nigga.

Quotations

Curated by Slice Billy

**“I am seeking. I am striving.
I am in it with all my heart.”**

-Vincent van Gogh

**“The best way to predict
the future is to invent it.”**

-Alan Kay

**“Those who do not want
to initiate anything,
produce nothing.”**

-Salvador Dali

**“Opportunities multiply
as they are seized.”**

-Sun Tzu

“Well done is better than well said.”

-Benjamin Franklin

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“Carve your name on hearts, not tombstones. A legacy is etched into the minds of others and the stories they share about you.”

-Shannon L. Adler

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