

Abolition is the goal:

**A collection of works from
those incarcerated at
Soledad Prison and a
broader telling of the
impacts from the P.I.C.**

Introduction



Dear Reader,

This zine was inspired by the few months I spent going inside the Soledad 'Correctional Training Facility' during 2022-2023. I was one of a small group of UCSC students who participated in a weekly program called "Exercises in Empathy: Transformative Justice". Each week we discussed different assigned readings, usually relating to forgiveness and mindfulness, but naturally that led to conversations about daily life, traumas, histories, politics, personal stories and our shared oppression. In no way do people who are stripped of their autonomy and dignity, robbed of years of life, brutalized and abused by the state inside prison face the same type of oppression that we do, as impacted community members or people on the outside. However, we acknowledged the shared source of oppression we face; the state and this world order.

At the end of the few months I collected poems, writings and artwork from the men who participated in the program and told them I would make a zine to share their voices and to speak on abolition.

This zine is intended for all of those curious about the Prison Industrial Complex, who want to hear the voice of incarcerated members of our community and who believe in abolition.

My intention with the zine is to publish it through UCSC and share it with those incarcerated via the Barrios Unidos Prison Project. Those on the inside and outside will be able to interact with the art and information and hopefully be able to communicate with each other through the zine's resources. Though the 'prison' manifests very literally in our world and within the United States, the ideologies and practices that support prison are ubiquitous and impact us all. Even if you have not directly interacted with a prison, you have likely been witness to state repression, police surveillance, social policing, carceral architecture, the 'injustice' system, border walls, corporate funding of pro-prison legislation, the war economy, weapons manufacturing, racist ideologies, the social and economic legacy of colonialism, unjust laws, detention centers, and quite literally so much more.

The framework of abolition should inspire us all. In a world that feels like its burning, abolition reminds us that after destruction there is restoration. We must practice building better systems as we tear this one down. Abolition does not exist without a critical lens of de-colonization, anti-capitalism, anti-imperialism, anti-sexism, anti-racism, anti-xenophobia and pro-resistance. We must plan to plant community gardens where there was once prison walls.

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Name:	CDCR#:
Arian Sanchez	J-88930
Dennis A. Martinez	F-79001
Sylvester Rawls	AL-1000
Robert "Yusef" McClain	AM-0066
Mark McMillan	AP-7671
Blacc Jesus AKA J.T. Tyler	BD-2879
Eric Barnard	G-62988
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(these are the names and CDCR#s of a few men inside who would like to be reached out to about the zine- uncredited pieces are because some men wished to remain anonymous)

you to drown for a gruesome killing yet they receive no penal
as gruesome? (Twisted logic) I even frown at how music is
to put f

glorifyin

tryna th

to the li

words

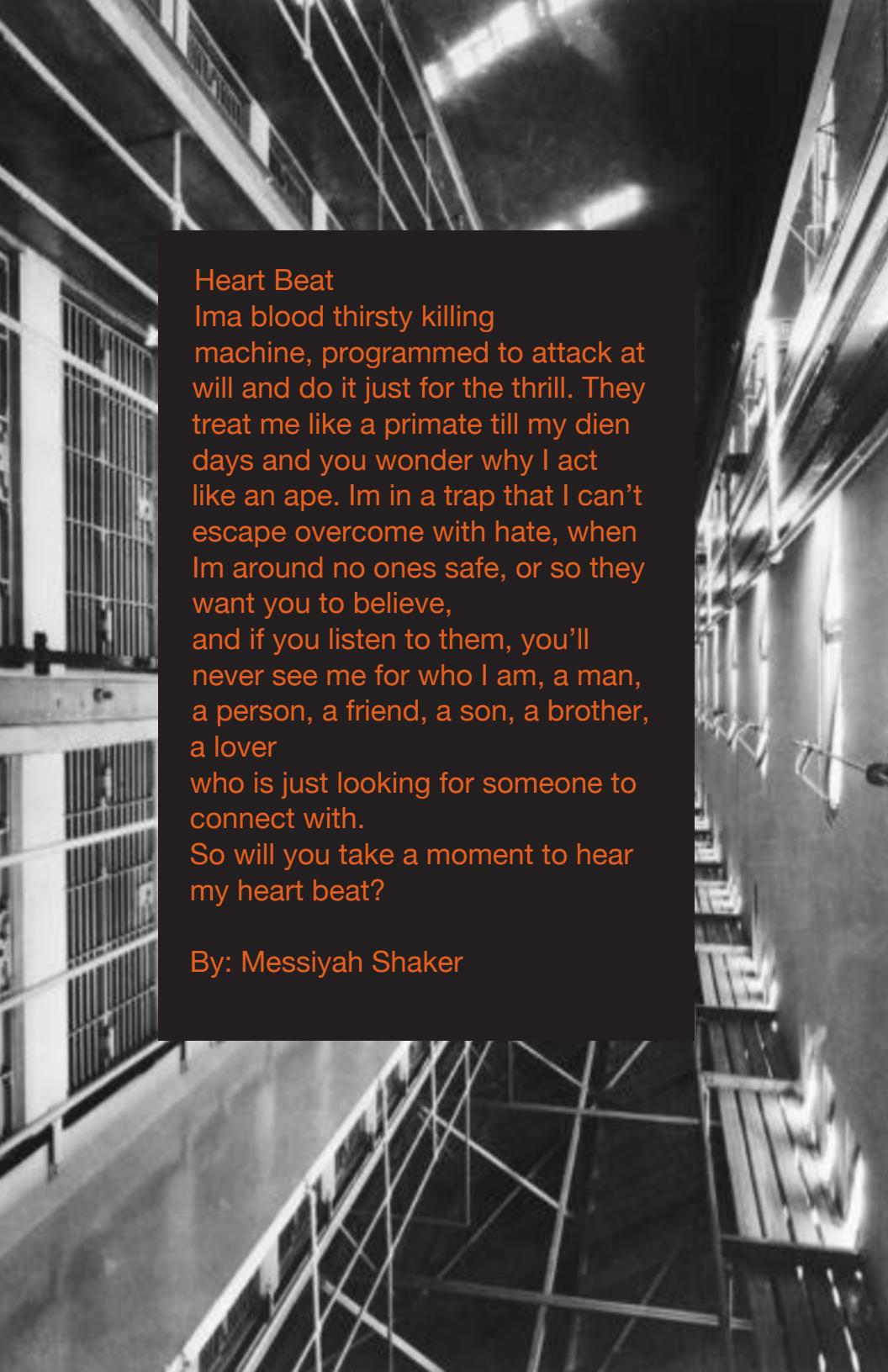
this not

So now

surround

Standing up, pushing back at all oppressors rather than be
cycle of legit or sitting back while they kill us off and ge





Heart Beat

Ima blood thirsty killing
machine, programmed to attack at
will and do it just for the thrill. They
treat me like a primate till my dien
days and you wonder why I act
like an ape. Im in a trap that I can't
escape overcome with hate, when
Im around no ones safe, or so they
want you to believe,
and if you listen to them, you'll
never see me for who I am, a man,
a person, a friend, a son, a brother,
a lover
who is just looking for someone to
connect with.
So will you take a moment to hear
my heart beat?

By: Messiyah Shaker



Titus Kaphar: The Jerome Project

Past, Present and Future.

By Walter Green

#AA4334

Is my past, past? How can it be? When it haunts my present so incessantly, Unbearable the weight from the constant mistakes I didnt mean to make. My heart breaks as I contemplate THE END

My past, the race I can't win, That Backstabbing ass friend

Like Groundhog Day reliving it again and again, And then; Through its excruciating burn we learn, I learn, In all the non-gifts giving its impossible to continue living in self inflicted ignorance, I learn, So its the future I romance, And the knowldedge I mist embrace change, so that me and mine can have a chance. I take the role of the man grabbing life by her hand and lead her in this dance, Honor and integrity posing as style in grace, It brings a smile to my face, as I replace yesteryears negatives of decisions made in haste, Its love & hate, you see I can't kill Ms. Past or I be damn For there's a chance I may not be where I'm at, But I definitely will not be who I am

Now I bury the seed of "no need" Fertilizing the life/ ground to cultivate a better breed Of Me

And excepting the blessing of a hard earned lesson, I progress and revel in my plight, That in the vast Darkness ahead, I must provide the light.

Outside Looking In...

See, the judge gave me a square box and told me to stay in, guess they thought i'd be sleeping, i'm on the inside looking out...

It seem they gave me more time than they even thought they would, now i'm on the inside trying to climb out...

I was encouraged to keep sleeping over the things I did, now I am regretting, mmmm

I'm on the inside peeping...I saw myself on the outside, man, life had me cheating, Now I am on the outside looking in, they gave me more time than I thought they would, on the inside...damn what was I thinking?

I was thinking about life and how easy it was, I was banging like a matha, that what it was?

I was cheating on life, that's what it was...on the inside looking out, more time crossed and passed as it should, no more regrets! that's what I said, no more hanging out, now I am hanging in...on the outside seeing all over again.

My eyes are down low, they whisper, he's sleeping again, with a smile on my face, i'm on the outside sleeping it al over again.

One day at a time, And let it begin with me... This was a square box that had me deep within, Now I'm on the outside looking in...

by Eric D. McGowan aka Nassi



American Made...

what is free?

if college education was free? in the land of the free, why so expensive for me, it be different if generaltion wealth hadn't shut the door, shook the floor, taxed me and back for more. it only bothers me because poverty is a robbery of my legacy, time and my sovereignty. I know if America were all euro, there would be free education, hell to be fair it would be health care, free as a right, though since there are Mexicans, blacks and Ricans and immigrants, no to that! in fact, they call it welfare but when they bail out the banks...they call it stimulus.

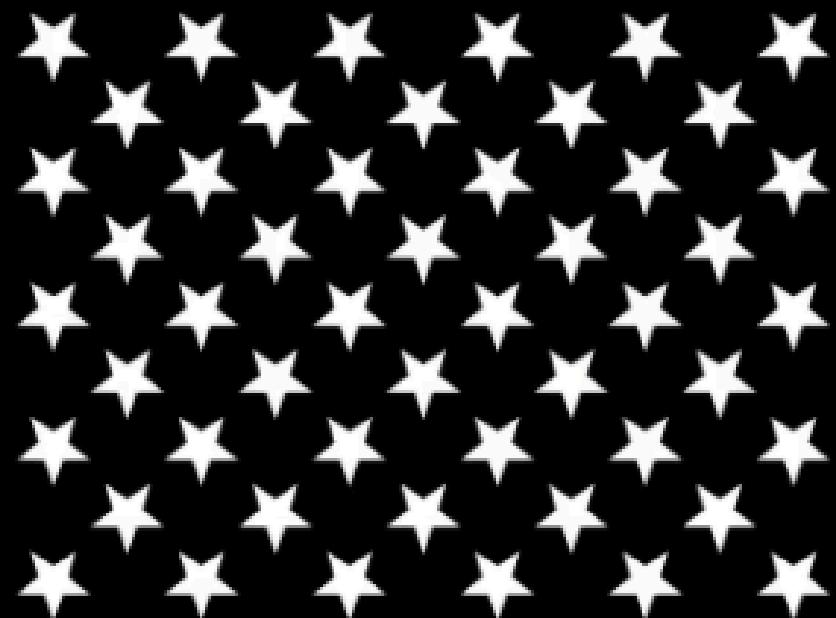
white america

a stimulus is welfare by another name, like policing is ku-klux-klanning by another name, your offended now? yet your alive... my ancestors died in the struggle against oppression, so no question in the land of the free, it ain't free...

if a man rapes, and murders, and steals, though this happens 15 years ago, would all be forgiven?

would you say that happened 15 years ago, why should you have to pay for it now...? what then about slavery? The way wealth was accumulated, by the labor of slavery, this generational wealth tips the scale for generations, in favor of white privilege.

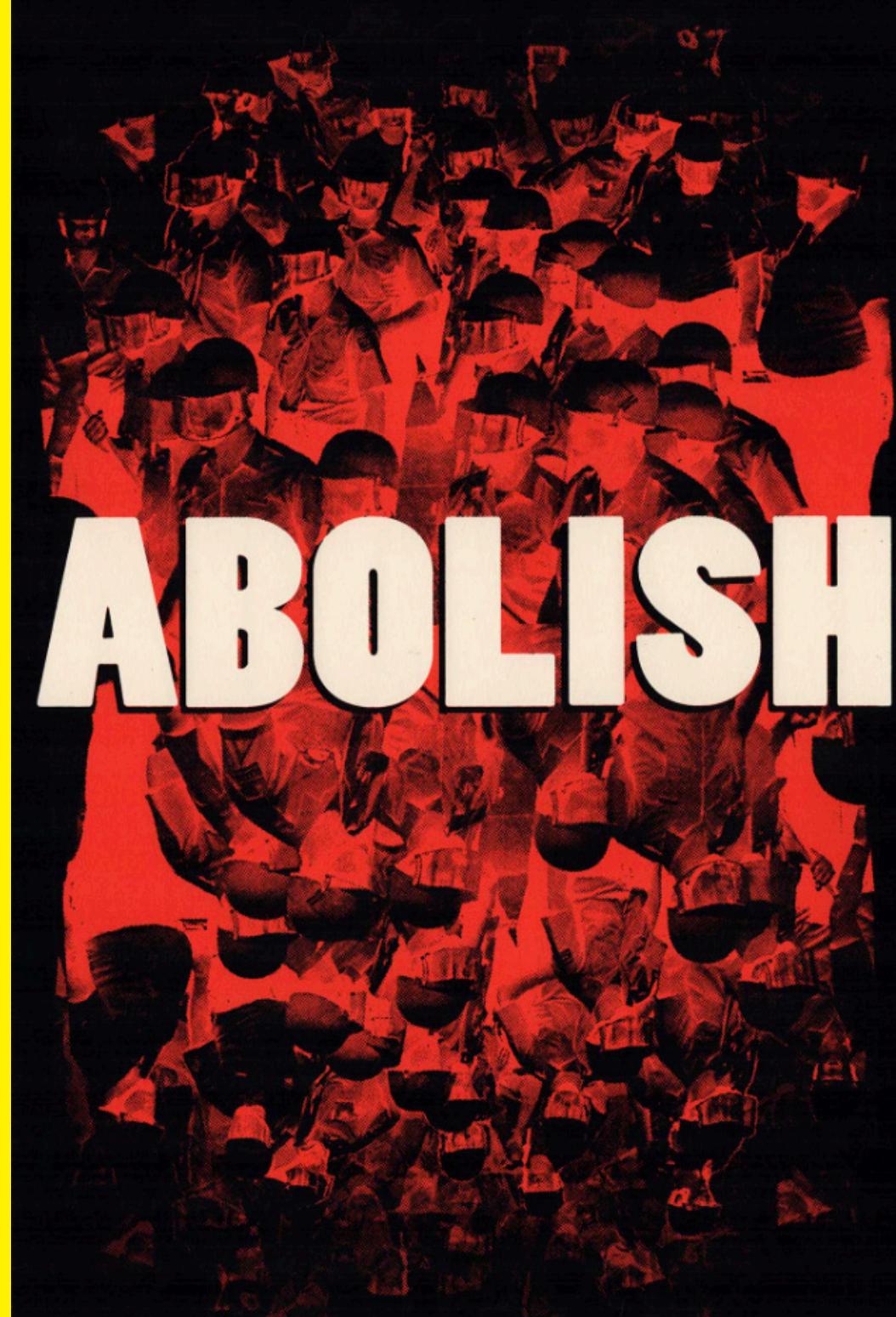
the balance is consistently unbalanced that have left Africans financially, as well as educationally behind, because wealth equals good education, blacks have been left less than the scraps, the scraps have produced a prison industrial complex system, a government whom continues to exploit and make money from slave labor. there are laws and policies that the wealthy will never experience, by proximity and privilege, lynching is still legal here in Amerikka, why?



FTP

the police ain't shit!
they kill unarmed citizens
they hunt black men and
 women
kill them while they are
 sleeping!
abuse black children,
give them life sentences,
they high five at another black
 death
they shot and kill black
 children
 fuck the police
the fucking police are criminals
 old jim crow codes, black
 codes, slave patrols is their
 policy, obviously
when the police show up,
 someone will die
so why would we ever call
 them?

**Police protect the STATE...
NOT THE PEOPLE**



What is Freedom?

To the world inside of you, and outside of you, Who are you?
Are you an atom blowing freely in the breeze, or a thought that changes with time?
Are you an emotion easily disturbed, or a feeling seeking to be touched?
Are you a breath of fresh air filling my lungs, or a raindrop that restores life?
Are you an ideal whose time has come, or an opportunity that has passed by?
Are you the wind beneath my wings, or the gravel under my feet?
Are you a treasure yet to be found, or simply a moment's foolish pleasure?
Are you a prayer that has been answered, or a desire still unfulfilled?
Are you a goal that has been reached, or just another wasted effort?
Are you the warmth beneath my touch, or a vision in my head?
Are you the blood coursing through my veins, or the heart beat under my ribs, who are you?
When you answer that, you will find.....freedom.

By Akili

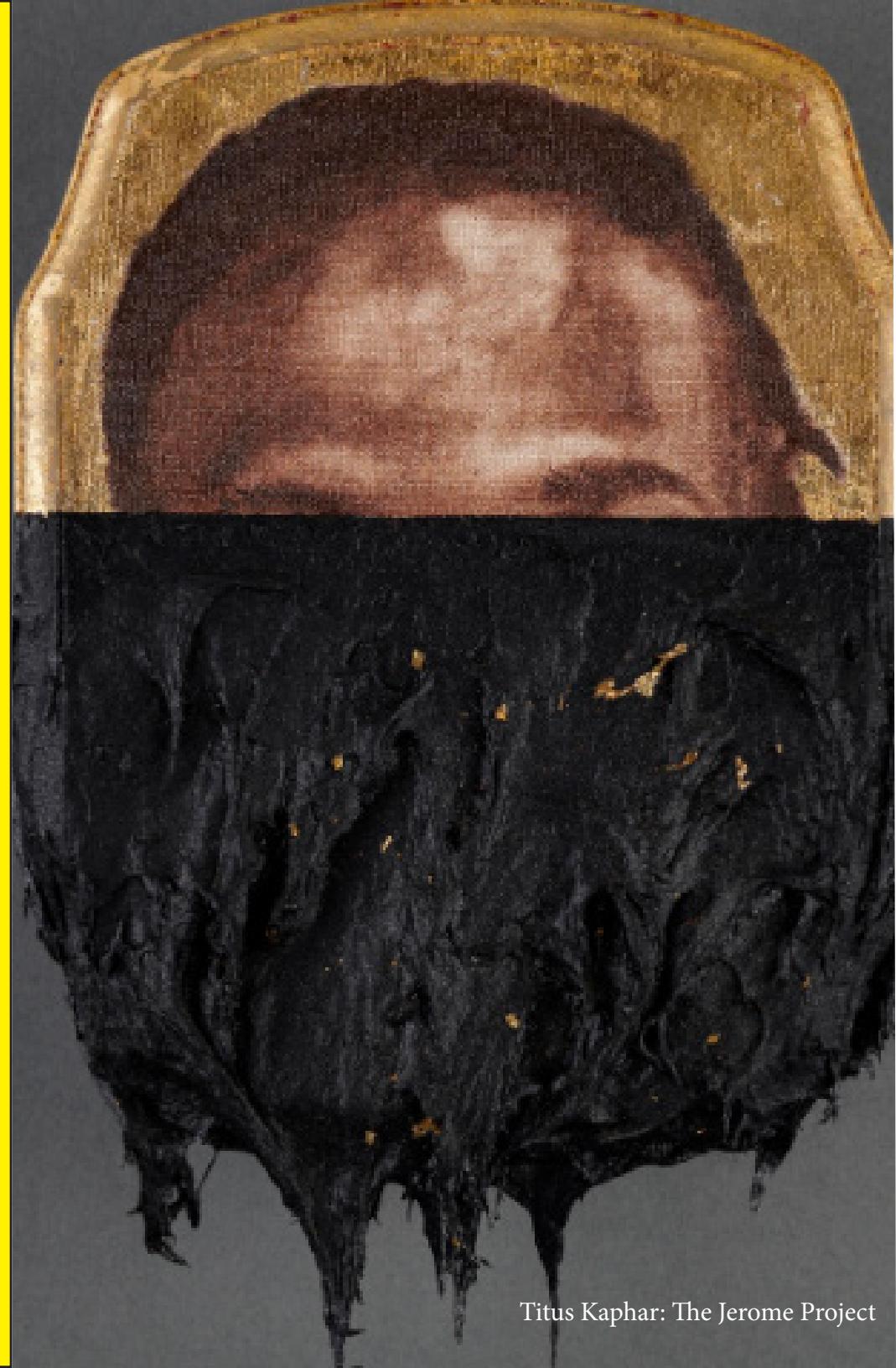




Redemption Song

Old pirates, yes, they rob I
Sold I to the merchant ships
minutes after they took
I From the bottomless pit
But my hand was made strong
By the hand of the Almighty
We forward in this generation
Triumphantly
Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs
Redemption songs
Emancipate yourselves from men-
tal slavery
None but ourselves can free our
minds
Have no fear for atomic energy
'Cause none of them can stop the
time
How long shall they kill our proph-
ets
While we stand aside and look?
Ooh
Some say it's just a part of it
We've got to fulfill the book
Won't you help to sing
These songs of freedom?
'Cause all I ever have
Redemption songs
Redemption songs
Songs of freedom
Songs of freedom
Songs of freedom...

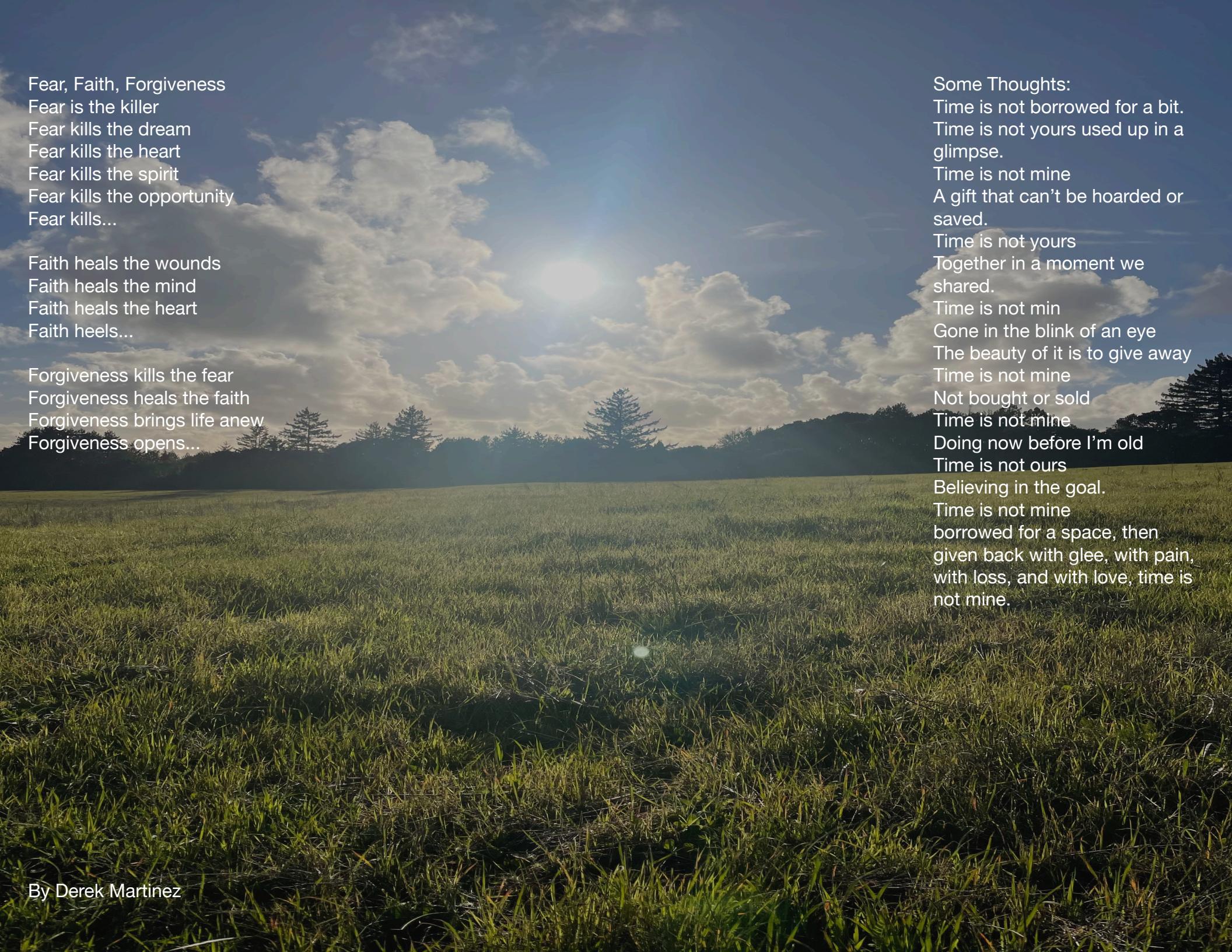
Hypocrisy
I meditate on elevation
I'm like a wave from the station
I'm going radio active on this black shit , it's
massive, they burned and gassed us, hung
harrassed us, gunned down, blast us, policy
of thrash us
It is easy to hide behind them white sheets,
trade em for some badge, glocs and gadgets
heartless savage, look what you have done to
humanity, then flip and psycho analyse black
sanity
but your vanity justifies your insanity
the klan be in the police stations, policies and
the white house, preaching, that prosperity for
them up for us in poverty, with the lights out,
tainted water, lead pipes out, 24 hour news
spins of life styles that you and I can't afford.
have you keeping up with Kim Kk till your
life's out American dreams for you get one
right now
teams red or blue
not crip or blood but democracy,
hypocrisy



Titus Kaphar: The Jerome Project

I Am From

I am from somewhere familiar yet
strange
I am from a cosmic explosion just like
you
I am from an imagination too deep to
comprehend
I am from a well thought out plan
I am from a time that has been lost
I am from non-existing morals held to
be true
I am from a vision with no ending, a
destiny for a few
I am from a soul shared by many, only
cherished by some
I am from a life yet to come
I am from love and hate, joy and pain
I am from where many want to go, but
none are willing to pay the price
I am from everywhere but no where
I am from sacrifices, tortures, inhu-
mane practices
I am from picket signs, marches, and
cries for freedom
I am from injustices, segregation, and
degradation
I am from the world, Planet Earth, hu-
manity and sub-human, sounds famil-
iar yet strange
I am from man and woman just like
you...



Fear, Faith, Forgiveness
Fear is the killer
Fear kills the dream
Fear kills the heart
Fear kills the spirit
Fear kills the opportunity
Fear kills...

Faith heals the wounds
Faith heals the mind
Faith heals the heart
Faith heals...

Forgiveness kills the fear
Forgiveness heals the faith
Forgiveness brings life anew
Forgiveness opens...

Some Thoughts:
Time is not borrowed for a bit.
Time is not yours used up in a
glimpse.
Time is not mine
A gift that can't be hoarded or
saved.
Time is not yours
Together in a moment we
shared.
Time is not min
Gone in the blink of an eye
The beauty of it is to give away
Time is not mine
Not bought or sold
Time is not mine
Doing now before I'm old
Time is not ours
Believing in the goal.
Time is not mine
borrowed for a space, then
given back with glee, with pain,
with loss, and with love, time is
not mine.



"A Driftwood's Embrace"

By: Dennis A. Martinez
F-79001
May 25, 2023
Trans, Just, Int.

As I lay floating along a sea of oblivion,
reminiscing of what was and no longer is.
I find myself adrift with no one in sight,
no direction to follow, no comfort allowed,
and no sense of belonging to, only a dark cloud.

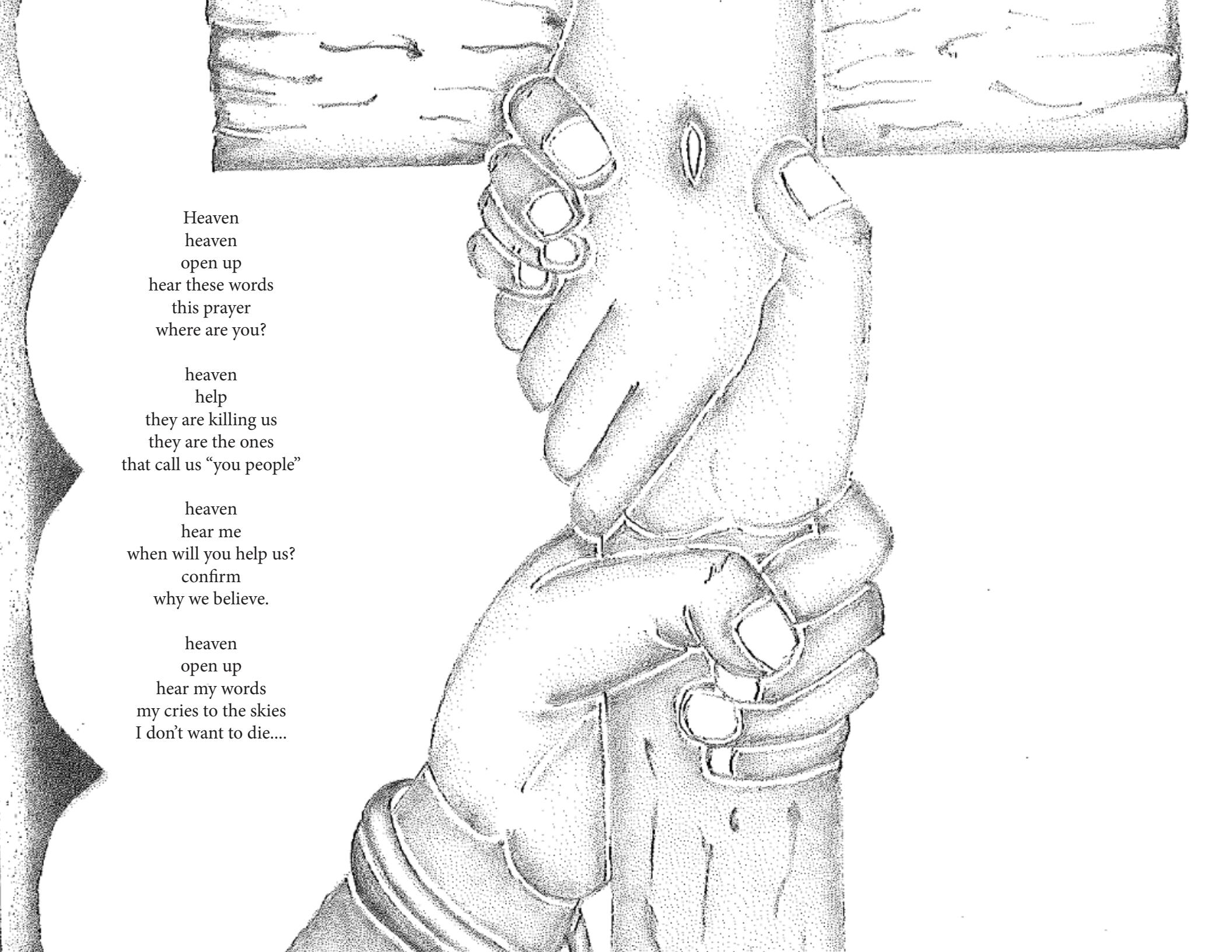
I am "Driftwood" with a brown smooth texture,
Latin in nature, humbled by life's upheaval.
I was born with a smile, with proportional branches,
Yet now I am drifting, scorched by intense heat
of rejection and of violence.
Blemished by unsound racial slurs and of remarks,
that lead to a realm of bitter nothingness.

Yes, I am "Driftwood", cut down by sorrow,
encompassed by a doubtful tomorrow.
Woe! to those who are ridiculed by laughter,
belittled, forgotten, transformed into a lesser.
Possessing no rest for a weary soul,
brought into existence from those who are asunder,
let it be not your breath in plunder!

My eyes pierce beyond the horizons to afar,
Searching to grasp the earth from ajar,
for a land that extends beyond the reach of grace,
for this is my dream, "A Driftwood's Embrace".

For such a brief moment, I will cherish time,
for God's gift is love, by means of an understanding mind.
What is that O'er yonder? Could it be my dream in sight?
Yes it is land! Something to survive for, I will not give up the fight!

(1)



Heaven
heaven
open up
hear these words
this prayer
where are you?

heaven
help
they are killing us
they are the ones
that call us "you people"

heaven
hear me
when will you help us?
confirm
why we believe.

heaven
open up
hear my words
my cries to the skies
I don't want to die....

Broad Impacts of the Prison Industrial Complex

Now that we have read through a few of the works from incarcerated peoples experiencing the vivid reality of the Prison Industrial Complex, let's think about how this system impacts us.

The Prison Industrial Complex as a term, was coined by Angela Davis in the late 1990s. It refers to the intertwined functions of the prison, private corporations, the state, military/police surveillance technology and weapons development, increased incrimination and increased incarceration, specifically onto oppressed peoples.

Within a system of capitalism, profit is always possible. Through state functions like prison, war, real estate/private property, and policing, of which the prison system is all implied in, there is huge opportunity for profit. Private prisons became operational in 1983, during the aftermath of the "War on Crime" and "War on Drugs", and, of course, during Reagan's time in office. America's history, economic framework and ideology tie very clearly with the functioning of the prisons system, and illuminate how sinister the industry is. To understand the P.I.C., we must begin with the fact that prisons and police evolved out of a need for white

America to surveil and control newly freed Black Americans after slavery was 'abolished'. Acknowledging that each policy, economic practice, ideological viewpoint and governmental function was developed specifically benefit wealthy white men is no shock, however, we loose our ability to critically assess our systems and how change might be possible when we are not vigilant about these impacts.

Increased militarism and surveillance has been made possible by the ever expanding budgets for weapons research and technological development. We have become over-evolved in our economy and technology and remain severely under-developed in our society.

With the largest military presence in the world and of the largest police dependency, it is horrifying how basic needs like education, health care, food and water are so underfunded in the America.

American police are the least trained in the world, only requiring 500 hours compared to some nations 4,500 hours, yet receive over \$135 billion in funding in just one year.

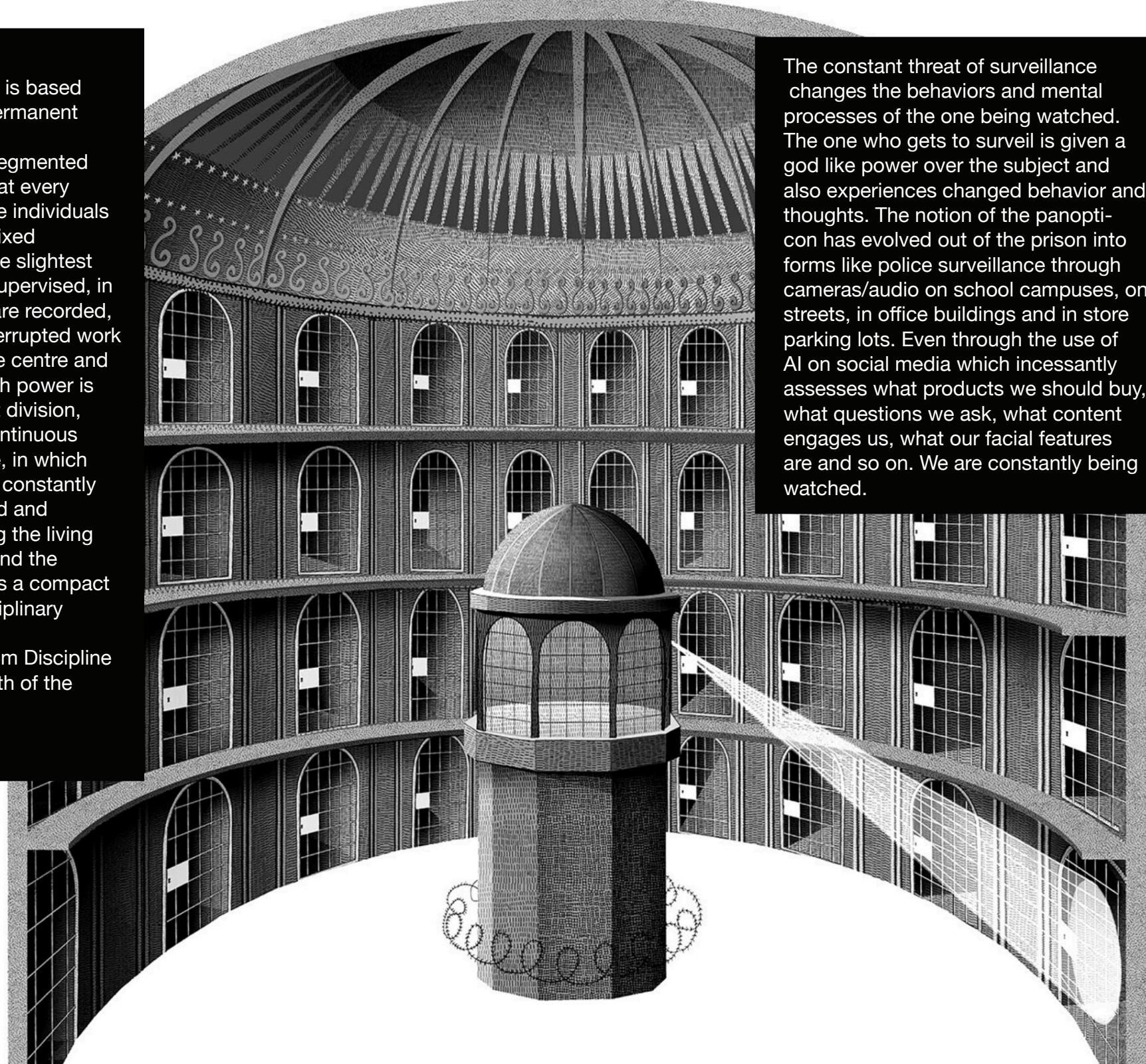
The Panopticon:

“This surveillance is based on a system of permanent registration...”

“This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead—constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism.”

“Panopticism” from Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison

Michel Foucault



The constant threat of surveillance changes the behaviors and mental processes of the one being watched. The one who gets to surveil is given a god like power over the subject and also experiences changed behavior and thoughts. The notion of the panopticon has evolved out of the prison into forms like police surveillance through cameras/audio on school campuses, on streets, in office buildings and in store parking lots. Even through the use of AI on social media which incessantly assesses what products we should buy, what questions we ask, what content engages us, what our facial features are and so on. We are constantly being watched.



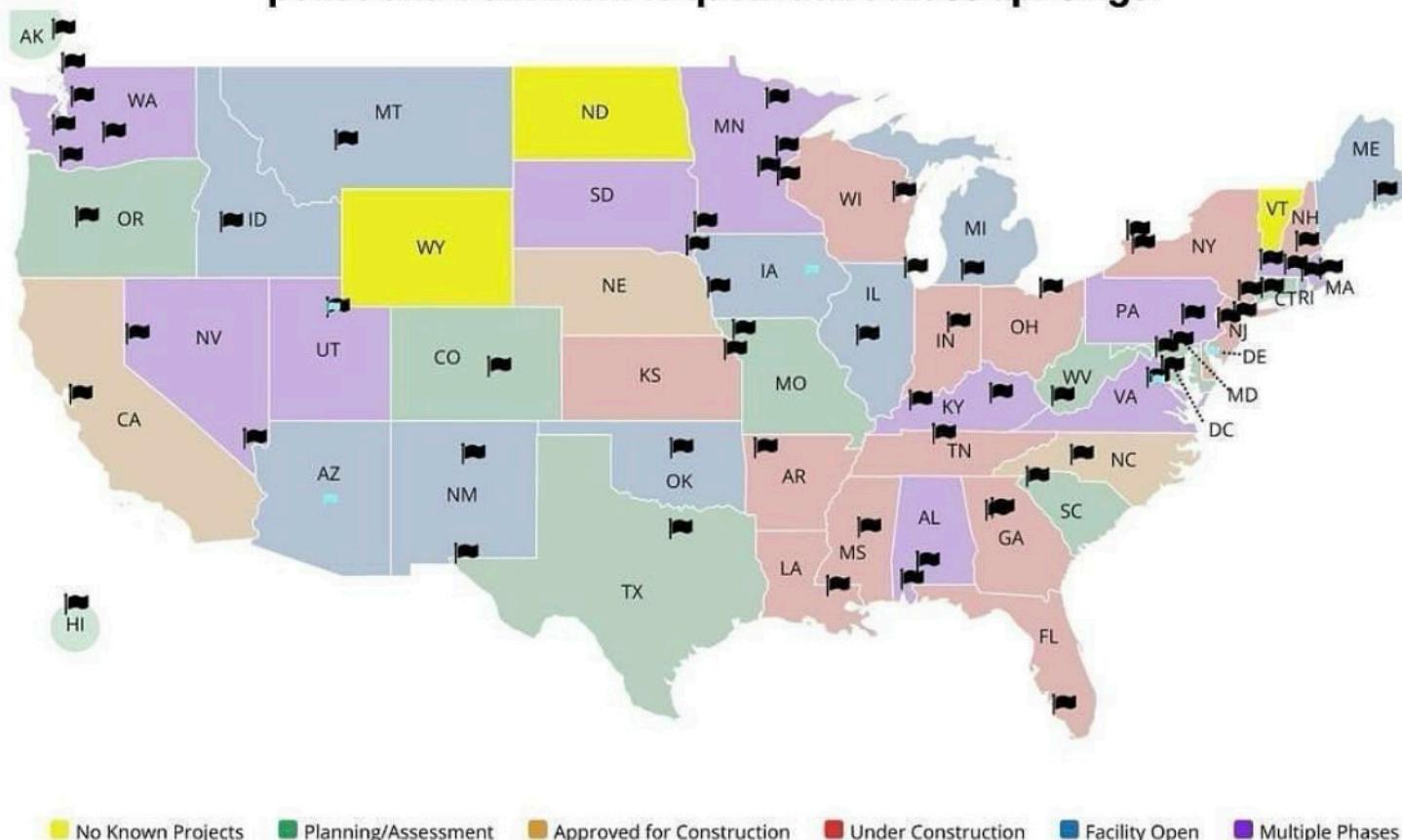
From Palestine to Mexico, Border Walls have got to GO!

Carceral architecture is all around, from the literal open air prison of Gaza, to the public schools of America. Architecture that is influenced by the carceral systems seems obvious to point out, by the looks of metal bars and cinderblock walls, but oftentimes it is unassuming architecture that is physically meant to make that which happens inside and those who are inside, invisible. In California, we are familiar with the visual of the border wall, which serves to physically block migration patterns and socially dehumanize those who are crossing borders. In occupied Palestine and Gaza, there is carceral architecture everywhere. The familiar border walls enclose all of Gaza and other occupied territories. There are roads/highways that sit above the infrastructure of other roads and tunnels, distinguishing where Israeli settlers and Palestinians are allowed to drive on. The settler would never have to know that there are Palestinian drivers below, but the Palestinian drivers are always aware that there are Israeli settlers driving above them. Across the U.S. there are I.C.E. detention centers and prisons that look like bleak office buildings and government centers, yet that hold thousands of bodies whose needs and humanity are being neglected. At each of these sites of carceral architecture there is extreme surveillance and military/police presence, ensuring further oppression to those inside.



COP CITIES, USA

There are SIXTY-NINE Cop Cities being built or already built since 2020 across the US. These urban counter-insurgency training centers are called euphemisms like "public safety training facility." The only states without plans for this type of project are ND, VT & WY. Research shows that the major push for these projects began after the uprisings of 2020 to further militarize the police and train them to quell future mass uprisings.



Research by Renee Johnston: isyourlifebetter.net/cop-cities-usa

"The media, government officials, and policy advisers endlessly refer to the moral panic over crime and connect prison growth to public desire for social order. In this explanation, what is pivotal is not the state's definitions of crime per se, but rather society's condemnations of rampant deviant behavior--thus a moral, not (necessarily) legal, panic." "Crisis and surplus are two sides of the same coin... Within any system of production, the idling, or surplusing, of productive capacities means that the society dependent on that production cannot reproduce itself as it had in the past...crises do indicate inevitable change, the outcome of which is determined through struggle."

"An enormous, and growing, portion of revenue flows into the prison system...How can the big state (California) pay its way?... In such an eventuality, wide-scale slavery, under the provisions of the Thirteenth Amendment to the US constitution, could be the big state's answer to tax struggle."

"Military Keynesianism emerged from the profound crises of the Great Depression, when dislocations and reconfigurations of capital, land, labor, and state capacity restructured capital-labor relations and remapped the world...Military Keynesianism came out of the same objective conditions that had produced Nazism and Facism" Abolition Geography, by Gilmore

Abolition

Abolition is many things. Most explicitly, abolition calls on the end of the Prison Industrial Complex, meaning policy and practice that separates the legal system, private corporations, the government, the carceral system and profit. As part of this action, money needs to be divested from the police, war and prison system and invested back into communities. Redistribution of wealth into public services like education, health care, basic needs, environmental protection has been proven to create stronger communities. Allowing communities to practice restorative justice and healing is only possible when basic needs are met. The movement for Abolition has largely been led by Black women, mothers, sisters, feminists and is guided by these teachings and notions of restoration and healing, but other BIPOC communities have also shaped the movement. Abolition desires to not only tear down prisons and transcend government oppression, but also to enable communities to evolve on their own. The theory and practice of abolition allow communities to adapt to the extreme oppression and injustice that they have faced.

What connects this world? Love, earth, tradition, parents and children, food, familiar habits, migration, spirituality, flowers?
Yes, and...
The notions of carcerality have spread in ideology and practice across states and nations, infecting the functioning of our society and creating deep wounds in communities. It creates a mutual oppression for oppressed peoples. Border walls, military exercises, prisons, detention centers, surveillance, state violence, political repression and forced labor are part of the praxis of militarism, the carceral system and the state. This is all tied up in the economics of our nation and the ideology that justifies how this nation functions. Though we might not immediately be impacted by the prison system, we still are being affected by it. It is up to community members to care and fight for liberation and abolition. We must fight for community gardens, healing spaces, free quality education, healthcare, cultural centers and all things that make strong communities.

Resources/ what now?

Local resources include:

Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos
Institute for Arts and Sciences,
UCSC
Critical Resistance Oakland
Heal Food Alliance
Block Cop City Movement
Slugs Against Cop City UCSC
CollectiveLiberation.org
Sankofa Sky Farm
local school district
local tenants union
Subrosa
Radical Reads Noname Book Club

Recommended Reading List:

“Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century” by James and Grace Lee Boggs
“Decolonization is not a metaphor” by Tuck and Wang
“Are Prisons Obsolete?” by Angela Davis
“Prison Theory” by Michelle Brown
“Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture” by Frederic Jameson
“Abolition Geography” by Ruth Wilson Gilmore
“The Critical Foundations of Visual Criminology: The State, Crisis, and the Sensory” By Brown and Carrabine

I hope that these pieces moved you and that these broader connections make sense. There is no ‘going back’ to a better time or a reality where hardship and oppression didn’t exist, and we face an extraordinarily oppressive and daunting future if we do not get organized and make change. Let our fear be outweighed by our care.

Many Indigenous philosophies emphasize the power of having duty and responsibility to your community and earth. With the responsibility to care for those around you and the planet, there is purpose and direction.

It is beyond an overwhelming time. The globalized world has enabled immense access to information, culture and technology that are greatly enriching our lives, yet costing so many their autonomy, health and joy. Acknowledging our position within this system can feel so detached and unfair, yet it should empower us to take necessary steps in forcing this world to function differently. Abolition and restorative prison work is tied to so much more than one would assume, like militarism, monocultured food infrastructure, weapons manufacturing, labor politics, tax culture, immigration, and more.

No one asked, but here is my advice:

1. Process grief, rage, sadness with yourself and with your community
2. Join an organization or make one that is actively contributing to a better future and more liveable reality.
3. Be in solidarity with oppressed peoples.
4. Educate/inform yourself and community.
5. Donate funds, time, resources, energy to those in need.
6. Stay critical, constantly questioning information or reasoning that you are given.
7. Maintain hope.
8. Simply and genuinely try.

