

BLESSED & BROKEN



Kolbe House Jail Ministry

SPRING 2021



Hope in Hardship

by Dormen (Brother Mu) L

I'm sure, whether believer or not, everyone can relate to being fettered by something in life...

Whether it's COVID-19, a dead-end job, systemic oppression/racism, a spouse whose relentless in being an abuser, life, fear, or the literal mental and physical forms of incarceration...

All of these chains can be broken!

It may be a mountain now, but we know mountains can be told to fall and crumble... as long as we fight, and unite, and hold dear to that light!

Blessed & Broken

2434 S. California Ave.
Chicago, IL 60608

Publisher

Kolbe House Catholic Jail Ministry

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Blessed & Broken

is a quarterly anthology of creative art by persons currently/formerly incarcerated in Cook County Jail and Illinois Department of Corrections institutions. It seeks to lift up the voices of our sisters and brothers impacted by incarceration. It is a project of Kolbe House, the Jail Ministry of the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago.

Hope in Hardship

by Ronald S

To hope is to never give up,
Always looking forward
To know you will make it through,

To never listen to the negative
But to only let the positive voice thru,
For it is your help, coming to your rescue.

And even though it may be hard to see,
Does not mean it will not come to be.

What if hope is just a test
To remind you how many tests you've passed,
Not based on how long the test lasted
Just that you passed it.

Let's just suppose the test was easy
That would only expose you tried.

But if you had to work and wait for it,
Once you received, it will show everyone
Your time has arrived.

Life Without Parole

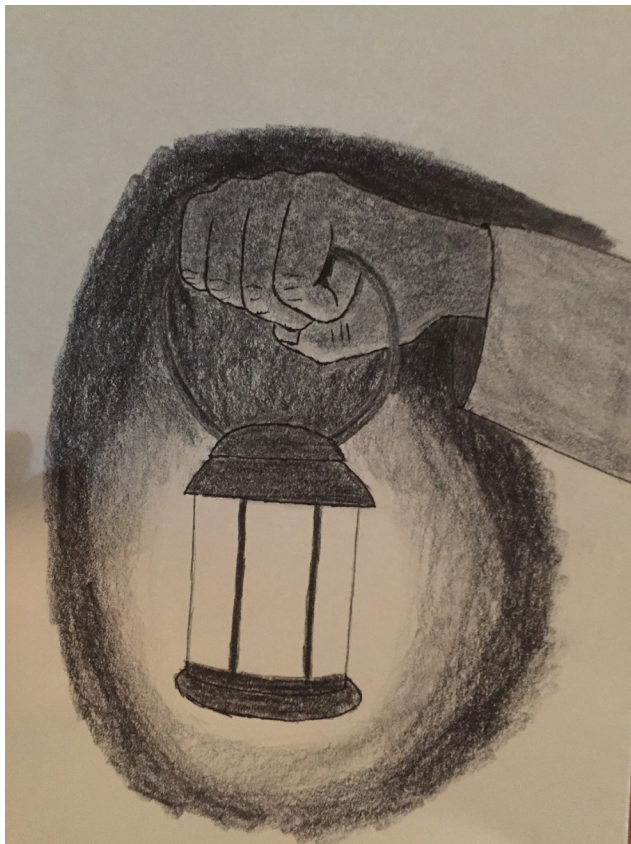
by Heather L

Life
crushing
squeezing
like a vice whose grip you can't escape
ever tightening
heavy
forever

2gether

by Dominique (Bless) B

The soul becomes pure when listening to the word...
Alone we are voiceless but 2gether we are heard...
My thoughts seem to fly a lot faster than a bird.
2gether is where we stand
Only ignorance will get served...
Who am I to judge.
Leave the judgement to our God...
Who sees the unseen
There's no life he would rob...
2gether
We are one in many different shades...
Similar stories, different books, familiar page...
Precious days, beautiful nights I dream about Heaven...
A purified drink, green garments of fine silk, and brocade...
2gether
We stand.
2gether
We soar.



Behold

by Willie S

I'm feeling so Homesick—
It's like every weight in the World is kicking in—
My entire family I'm missing—
A redo, I'm wishing—
This destiny of mine... tripping—
Gotta change it, gotta flip it—
My movie thus far... skip it—
My script... rip it—
All these arrows flying at me, dip it—
I'm so tired of running—
So tired of ducking—
So, so tired of hearing inmates squawking like chickens—
I'm tired of hearing them all around me clucking—
But like a soldier, gotta keep on trucking—
Because my goal is to make it home—
My dream's gotta get sold—
All the while the enemy's trying hard to make me fold—
But I'm a pot of gold—
I got God on my side, Pause Devil, I'm putting you on hold
You looking at an Overcomer—
BEHOLD!

The Hill We Climb

Inaugural Poem 2021

by Amanda Gorman, *First National Youth Poet Laureate*

When day comes we ask ourselves
Where can we find light in this never-ending
shade?
The loss we carry,
A sea we must wade.
We braved the belly of the beast;
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace.
And the norms and notions of what "just" is
Isn't always justice.
And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it.
Somehow we do it;
Somehow we weathered and witnessed
A nation that isn't broken but simply unfinished.
We, the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny black girl descended from
slaves
And raised by a single mother can dream of
becoming president,
Only to find herself reciting for one.
And yes we are far from polished, far from pris-
tine,
But that doesn't mean we aren't striving to form
a union that is perfect.
We are striving to forge a union with purpose,
To compose a country committed to all cultures,
colors, characters and conditions of man.
And so we lift our gaze not to what stands be-
tween us, But what stands before us.
We close the divide, because we know to put
our future first,
We must first put our differences aside.
We lay down our arms
So we can reach out our arms to one another.
We seek harm to none and harmony for all.
Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew,
That even as we hurt, we hoped,
That even as we tired, we tried,
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious—
Not because we will never again know defeat
But because we will never again sow division.
Scripture tells us to envision
That everyone shall sit under their own vine and
fig tree,

And no one shall make them afraid.
If we're to live up to our own time,
Then victory won't lie in the blade but in all the
bridges we've made.
That is the promised glade,
The hill we climb if only we dare it.
Because being American is more than a pride
we inherit,
It's the past we step into and how we repair it.
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it,
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying
democracy.
And this effort very nearly succeeded,
But while democracy can be periodically delayed
It can never be permanently defeated.
In this truth, in this faith we trust,
For while we have our eyes on the future, history
has its eyes on us.
This is the era of just redemption.
We feared at its inception.
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs of such
a terrifying hour,
But within it we found the power
To author a new chapter,
To offer hope and laughter,
To ourselves sow. While once we asked:
How could we possibly prevail over catastro-
phe?
Now we assert: How could catastrophe possibly
prevail over us?
We will not march back to what was,
But move to what shall be, a country that is
bruised but whole,
Benevolent but bold,
Fierce and free.
We will not be turned around or interrupted by
intimidation
Because we know our inaction and inertia will be
the inheritance of the next generation.
Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might and might with
right,
Then love becomes our legacy
And change our children's birthright.
So let us leave behind a country better than the
one we were left.

With every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
We will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.
We will rise from the golden hills of the West.
We will rise from the windswept Northeast where our forefathers first realized revolution.
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the Midwestern states.
We will rise from the sunbaked South.
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover.
In every known nook of our nation,
In every corner called our country,
Our people, diverse and beautiful,
Will emerge battered and beautiful.
When day comes we step out of the shade,
Aflame and unafraid.
The new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it,
If only we're brave enough to be it.

Courtesy of the L.A. Times. Accessible online at: <<https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-01-20/watch-and-read-amanda-gormans-inauguration-day-poem>>.

His Promises

by Heather L

When I'm at the end of my rope
When I feel like one more thing will break me
I turn to my Lord and remember His promises
I will always love you
I will never forsake you

I suffer every day in unbearable heat
Drowning in a sea of negativity
I think nobody loves me, nobody cares.
And I remember my Lord's promises:
My grace is sufficient for you
For my power is made perfect in weakness.

I'm isolated, far away from my home
and the people who love and support me.
The worst thing I can imagine has happened.
I lost my beloved mother and couldn't be there
with her at the end.

My Lord promised
There will be no more tears
No sickness, no suffering, no death.
We will be together in paradise
For you are my beloved.

So I look for the gifts each day brings.
Even in this dark place I can find them.



Dear COVID-19

by Ronald S

Dear COVID-19, I want to thank you
And wish you farewell.

Just like you came, you will also have to go
Today they cry out your name
But once tomorrow comes
They'll say it no more.

To me you came as a light,
Exposing all that was wrong
That needed to be made right.

We got too comfortable with the way things were
But just like all the things that were hidden
You too have to go
Because you were exposed
And now we know.

We hate you took our loved ones away
You took away the jobs and tried to take
The way we lived and where we stay.

I thank you for being the reset button
On all the hot button issues
But once you're gone
We will still need tissues.

Not because the life you have taken
But because of all the CEL-LE-BRA-TING.

Redeemed

by Heather L

You took my life from me
but you left my heart beating.
You left me

bruised
broken
shattered

A lump of flesh, bone and blood
Lying on the floor
But I have been able to rebuild.
What you meant for evil
God has used for good.

He is always here
Right beside me,
Crying with me
And carrying me home.



Greetings! We see that you have been a subscriber to the publication formerly known as **Making Choices**. Kolbe House is reviving the publication under a new name, **Blessed & Broken**, beginning with this issue on the theme, **“Hope in Hardship.”** We hope you are moved and inspired by the art work and poetry included here.

Please fill out this page and mail it back to us if you want to receive this publication from Kolbe House.

Tell your friends to subscribe as well!

They can write to us at 2434 S. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60608.

The theme for the next issue will be our new title, **Blessed & Broken**. We invite you to create your own poem or drawing on this theme and submit it to us for publication.

We want to hear from you! Tell us what you would like to read in **Blessed & Broken** and suggest a theme for future issues.

Know that you are in our prayers. God bless,
The Staff and Volunteers at Kolbe House

Yes, I would like to subscribe to **Blessed & Broken**.

I would like to read future issues on the theme:

Blessed & Broken Subscription

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Editorial Statement

Blessed & Broken is a creative arts ministry of Kolbe House, the Jail Ministry of the Archdiocese of Chicago. It provides a platform for those who are impacted by incarceration to share stories of brokenness and blessing.

Blessed & Broken seeks to amplify the voices of people on the inside to reach audiences on the outside. We encourage you to submit original poetry, short stories, and visual art for publication. By submitting your work to Kolbe House, you give permission for publication.

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