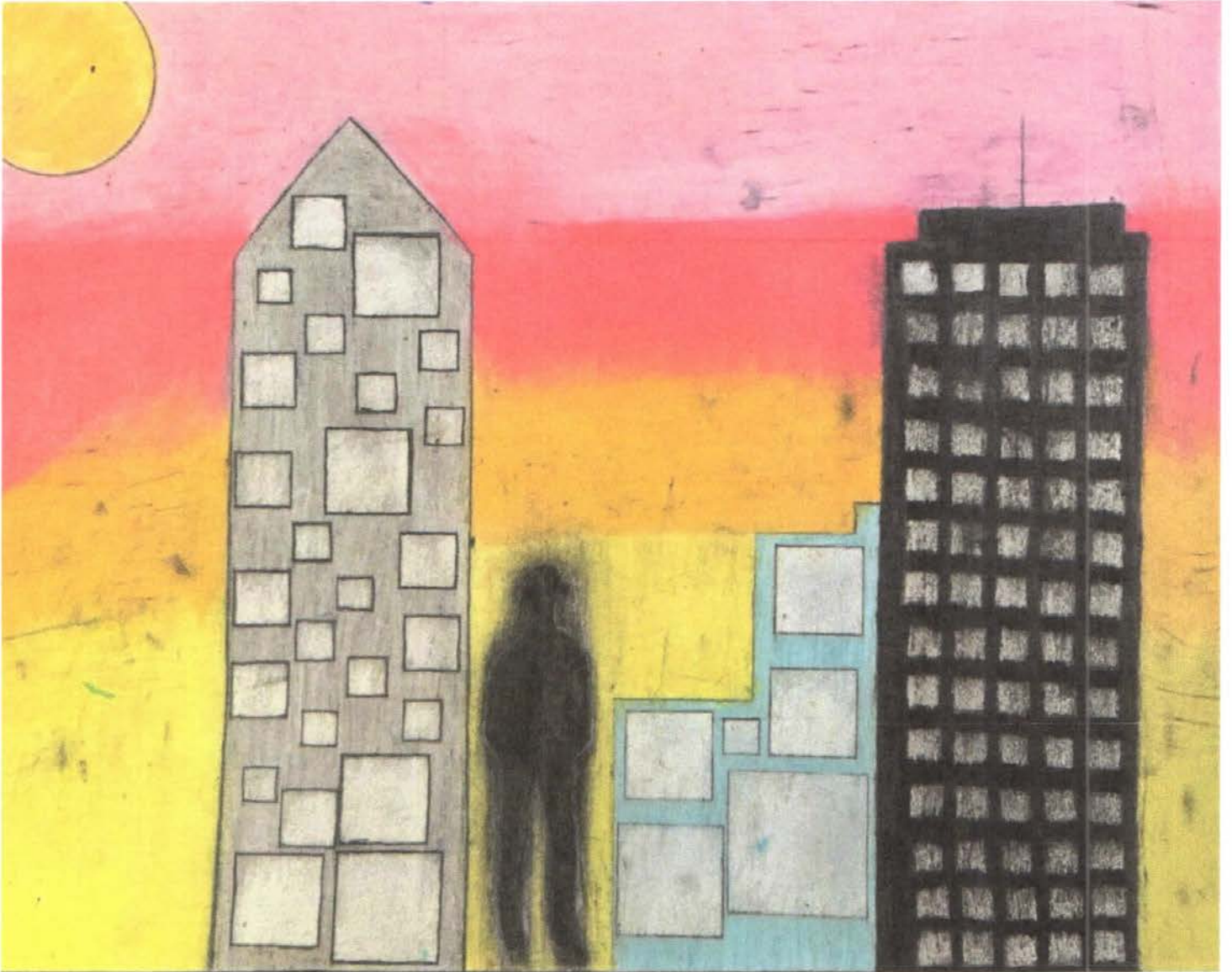


# Reflections

## 2024





Landscape with Shading: Cityscape with Sunset

Material: Oil Pastel

Artist: Trevor



# Self Doubt

*Way down deep below*

*Emotions run deep*

*Been feeling so low*

*And I'm afraid to speak*

*Can't anyone tell*

*Sometimes I'm buried deep inside a shell*

*Or sometimes I'm burning like the fires blazing in hell*

*This is the hand I'm dealt*

*Still nobody can tell*

*Nothing but bad luck,*

*And nobody gives a f\*\*\**

*I'm fine*

*F\*\*\* you*

*Just shut the F\*\*\* up*

*But when you leave make sure that door stays shut forever*

*Sick of fighting*

*Tired of lying*

*Over the shame*

*Please find somebody else to point the finger at to blame*



Landscape with Shading: Cityscape with Sunset

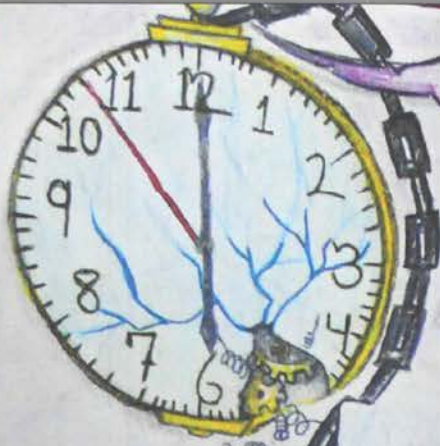
Material: Oil Pastel

Artist: JR

## THE FRIEND I WISH I NEVER NEW

I'VE BEEN TRAPPED WITHIN ITS DARKNESS & NOW  
ENCAGED I LIVE WITHIN A CELL, ITS PAIN, THE HURT  
THE LIES, ITS YEARNING, & ALL THE STORIES, THAT  
IT TELLS, I HAVE FALLEN, FAR, FROM BENEATH MY EGO  
SO NO, IT WON'T, JUST, LET ME BE, I REFUSE  
I KNOW, I MUST STAND TALL, MY EGO, WANTS 2 SCREAM  
THOSE STRATEGIC PLANS & COFFIN WAJS, I SIT, I WATCH  
& SEE, IT PLAYS THESE STRINGS, LIKE MELODIES  
BUT ITS FLAWED ON BROKEN DREAMS, THESE SCARS, ITS PAIN  
I FEEL WERE MADE, TO RIP & TEAR AS IT BREAKS, MY SOUL APART  
SO THESE WALLS MAY GROW THICKER THESE BARS THEY GET COLDER  
BUT, FIRM I STAND MY GROUND, I'VE BEEN BATTERED DOWN  
2 BE BUILT UP, THESE DOORS, I CAN HEAR, THESE SOUNDS  
YET THEY'RE SILENT ~~SCREAMS~~ I TRUST, I BEAR ITS WEIGHT, MY HOPE  
IS FREEDOM, BUT JUDGED BY REKS' & COUCH, ON FLAKENT GROUNDS  
A SYSTEM FLAWED WITH A PAST THAT IS BROKEN DOWN  
YET HERE I AM, YES HERE I AM, HERE, I STAND PROFOUND  
I HEARD THEM SAY, THAT WE THE PEOPLE, BUT YET, NO LONGER  
DO I HEAR THESE SOUNDS & I HOPE ONE DAY, THESE GATES  
WILL OPEN & YOU 2, CAN ENJOY ITS SOUND...  
WHILE THAT REVOLVING DOOR HAS GROWN ITS HORNS, AROUND THESE BORDS  
& @ THOSE STORES & EVEN @ YOUR CORNERS, ITS SILENCING FAITH  
AS ALWAYS DOES, WILL WEAR ITS USING CLAW, ITS STRONG & YET STEADY  
AS IT LINKS <sup>TO</sup> ITS HORRID SOUNDS, SO FIGHT I MUST OR FIGHT I MAY  
AS I LOOK WITHIN ITS MIRRORS, 2 FACE THIS CLAW, WHO STOLE MY CROWN  
& PLACED ME IN THIS TERROR, SO FIGHT I WILL, YET NO EXCUSE  
SEE FREEDOM, IS WHAT'S BEST, SO STACK YOUR CHIPS AS U WISH U MAY  
THIS TIME I CHOOSE WHAT'S BEST, SO NO, I WILL NOT FALL, FOR I'M @ THE EN  
OF ALL MY WITTS, YET HERE, I'M MADE 2 BRACE, I CHOOSE 2 FIGHT BUT TRIED  
YOU SEE & RISE BEFORE MY FALLS, I CAN'T TURN BACK, I WON'T TURN BACK  
2 THE SCREAMS THAT HIDE, SO DEEP, BEHIND THESE WALLS, THE CLINK THAT DO  
THAT CLICKITY CLINK & THOSE SOUNDS OF CHAINS, I NEW WITH, I NEVER NEW  
SO THIS I SAY, GOOD BYE OLD, I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO, SO HERE'S 2 ALL  
WAS BROKEN DREAMS, I SAY, CHEERS, THIS OVES FOR YOU, AS I HEAR





### Window Pain

As I sit here in a world, I thought  
 I'd open an eye. Familiar faces pass, but  
 not one can I call a friend. That old familiar  
 feeling of regret mixed with pain slowly trickles  
 through my veins. Time passes as I try to stay  
 sane. The nostalgia I've made myself live on  
 my brain. I do what I can, I try to maintain.  
 All the while my thoughts threaten to drive  
 me insane. I read, I write. I pour my  
 heart out through the pen until I'm drained.  
 For here life stands still while every thought  
 emotion and feeling is a sun every tick. No  
 matter what I do it feels as if it's done  
 in vain because in this place you get no  
 sunshine without rain. So here I  
 stand, notched by the window frame  
 and I wonder if anyone can feel this  
 Window Pain? For on the other side of  
 the glass is a different plain. There's  
 Regular people, society and fame. There goes  
 a hero and there's me, the villain.  
 There's the righteous and the same,  
 There's Society and I'm the stain. There's  
 the me, not and then... and then, there's  
 there's everything else. So I look out the  
 window, past my reflection and I wonder  
 with whom can anyone... anyone feel this  
 Window Pain?

"When you see but one set of  
 footprints in the sand... that's  
 when I carried you my friend..."



I remember when  
 country was called cotton  
 been in bed out of jail so  
 much, I'm... helped  
 meet... there are  
 like the... american  
 dream...



Break The Chains



Can you see a lion without  
 it's man? Can anyone feel the pain  
 as it runs out of my pen? Can you  
 how can they, unless they know how  
 it's pain? How can you? Can you  
 understand their struggle? This street  
 concrete and steel become a prison  
 and in vain you watch your hopes and dreams  
 wane and your life slowly flows down  
 the drain. How does that help?  
 How is it human to watch your own  
 people struggle and strain? We build  
 our own cages. They wonder why we're  
 so angry. It's time to change in the  
 light of the Window Pain and let the  
 world feel your Window Pain...

The Broken

Stevens Andrade 4/24/24



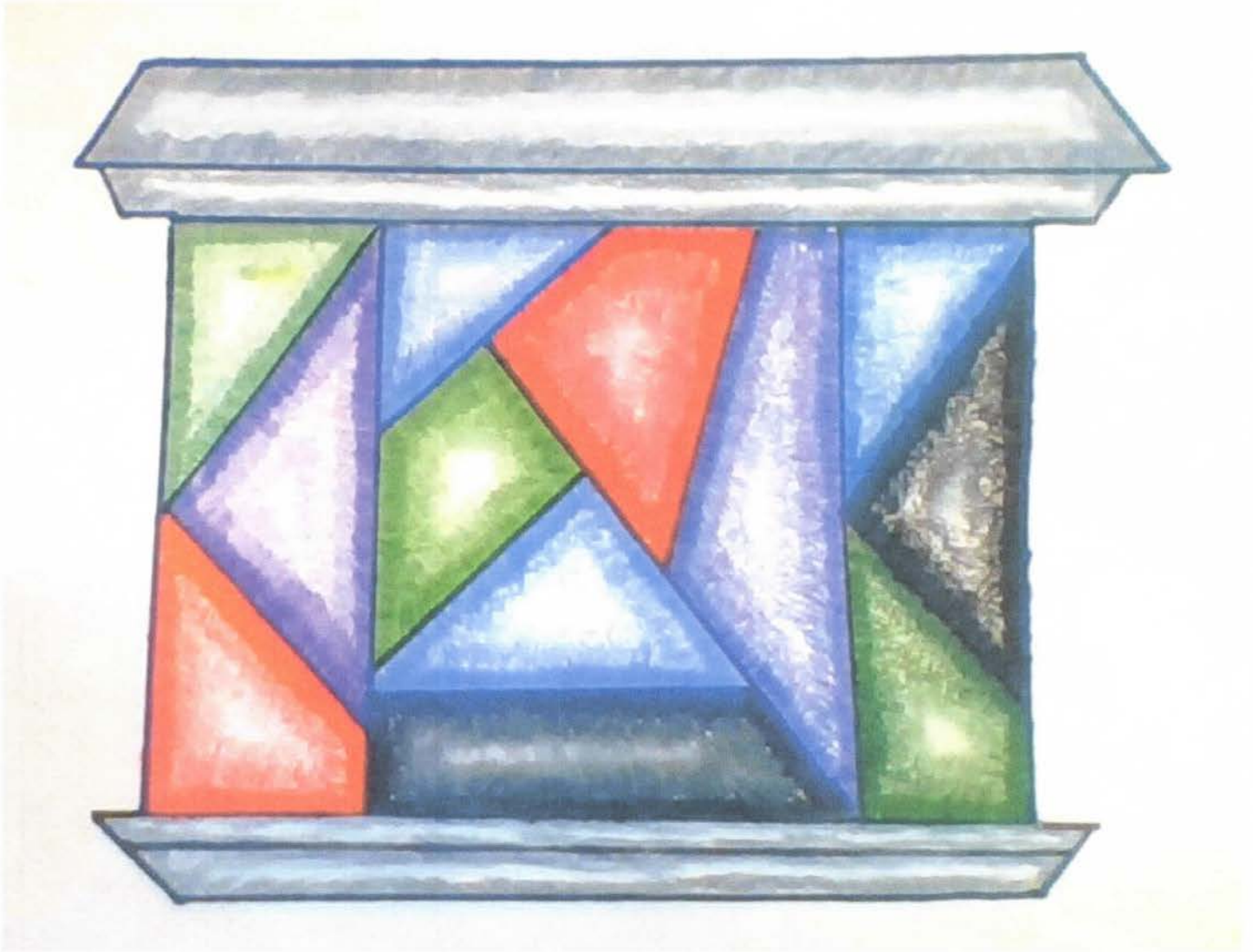




Haunted House with Color-Blending

Material: Colored Pencil and Sharpie

Artist: XB



Stained Glass Window with Shading

Material: Colored Pencil

Artist: KF





Faith Ringgold Inspired "Story Quilt" Design

Materials: Collage

Artist: NC



Landscape: Island Scene with Sunset

Material: Oil Pastel

Artist: EM





Dream House Design

Material: Colored Pencil and Sharpie

Artist: JW

## How Jail has Changed My Life for the Better.

I'm from Ontario, Canada. In March of 2022, I got arrested on Federal Drug charges. Since my arrest, I have been working on becoming a better person for myself and my family. I have a wife and six children. I have overcome a lot over the past two years since my arrest. I have struggled with a drug addiction and mental health problems for most of my adult life. This struggle is something I have been working on every day. I have been working on my sobriety and focused on what I can do to improve myself as a man, husband and father.

One of the things I have been focused on the most is completing my GED. I only have one section left to complete. Getting my GED is going to set me up for further success. After reaching this goal, I will be enrolling in a trade program while in prison. I would love to get my automotive certificate. The accomplishments of this goal will also allow me to become a role model and example for my children. There is nothing more important to me in life than them. I want them to understand that no matter the circumstances you find yourself in life, you have the choice to better yourself.

Without coming to jail, I wouldn't have the time to self-reflect and use a bad situation to better myself to become a better man overall. Making these life changes has taught me that it is never too late to make the right decisions and change my life for the better. I hope to look back on these days and thank the people along the way that have helped me. I know without them, I wouldn't have achieved my goals alone. I hope that this reflection will help other people like me. Don't ever give up on yourself!

Anonymous – Schenectady City School District





Dream House Design

Material: Colored Pencil and Sharpie

Artist: JD

### 2023 My Life Changing Event.

On October 4, 2023 I made my biggest mistake which made me come to jail in New York State. This decision took me away from my family and kids. I knew I was doing wrong and that one day I would end up in jail but I never thought this soon. My first two months was hard for me and my family. My family said to take "the time" because I was going to get deported. I have been here almost 6 months and it as taught me a lot and I think it is a good thing.

Most people think being in jail is not a good thing but for me it has been. Being in jail at first, didn't make me happy but now that I have been here, I have come to realize that it has been good for me. While I have been in jail, I have come to appreciate and value the little things in life. I have missed out on celebrating my kids' birthdays and holidays. I also received news that my grandfather passed away and I was unable to say goodbye to him. This experience has taught me that you cannot take time with your loved ones for granted.

When the holidays passed and the new year came, I decided to make good choices and go to school. School is important to me because I am not from this country and I want to be in the first in my family to get an American GED. Getting my GED and going to school everyday will allow for me to have better opportunities in life. Without my time in jail, I may not have had the opportunity to go back to school and focus on my education.

I want others to know that sometimes being in bad situation and having to come to jail can be a blessing in disguise. Without my time here, I would not have realized all those little things I used to take for granted. Also, I am so glad that I now am a better person and father. I am also more disciplined and willing to do the right things now because of my opportunity to be in jail. I now have a second chance to make things right!

Anonymous – Schenectady City School District





Greek Character I Relate to with Background: Poseidon in his Sea Kingdom

Materials: Sharpie and Colored Pencils

Artist: ET

## "LOST"

STARING AT MYSELF THROUGH A LOOKING GLASS,  
I SEE PARTS AND MEMORIES FROM A FRACUTRED PAST.

LIVING IN THE MOMENT, TRYING TO BE FREE,  
ABSORBING ALL THE DARKNESS, THAT SURROUNDS ME.

LISTENING TO MY THOUGHTS, BEGGING FOR AIR,  
NOT QUITE AT ALL SURE, IF IT'S EVEN ME STANDING THERE.

FEELING EMOTIONS THAT ALWAYS STEER ME WRONG,  
FEARING MY INNOCENCE, HAS BEEN GONE FOR TOO LONG.

LOOKING INTO THE DEPTHS OF A MERCILESS SEA,  
SWIMMING TOWARDS MYSELF, BUT I CAN'T SAVE ME.

STARVING FOR A TASTE, OF A PIECE TO EXIST,  
BEING GONE FOR SO LONG, AM I EVEN STILL MISSED?

POUNING ON A DOOR WITH NO WORKING KEY,  
HOW LONG MUST I BE TORTURED, WITH THE DEMONS I SEE?

EYES SHATTERED SHUT, BRUISES ENGULF MY FRAIL HEART,  
LIKE A NEWBORN MEAK CHILD, GOD, WHERE DO I START?

BAREFOOT IN THE SAND, ONLY ONE FOOTPRINT STAYS,  
WAITING FOR THE WAY OUT OF THIS MYSTERIOUS MAZE.

ASKING FOR ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS AT ANY COST,  
LONGING TO BE RESCUED, BUT FOR TOO LONG IVE BEEN LOST.

KERRILYN POLITE  
MARCH 2024

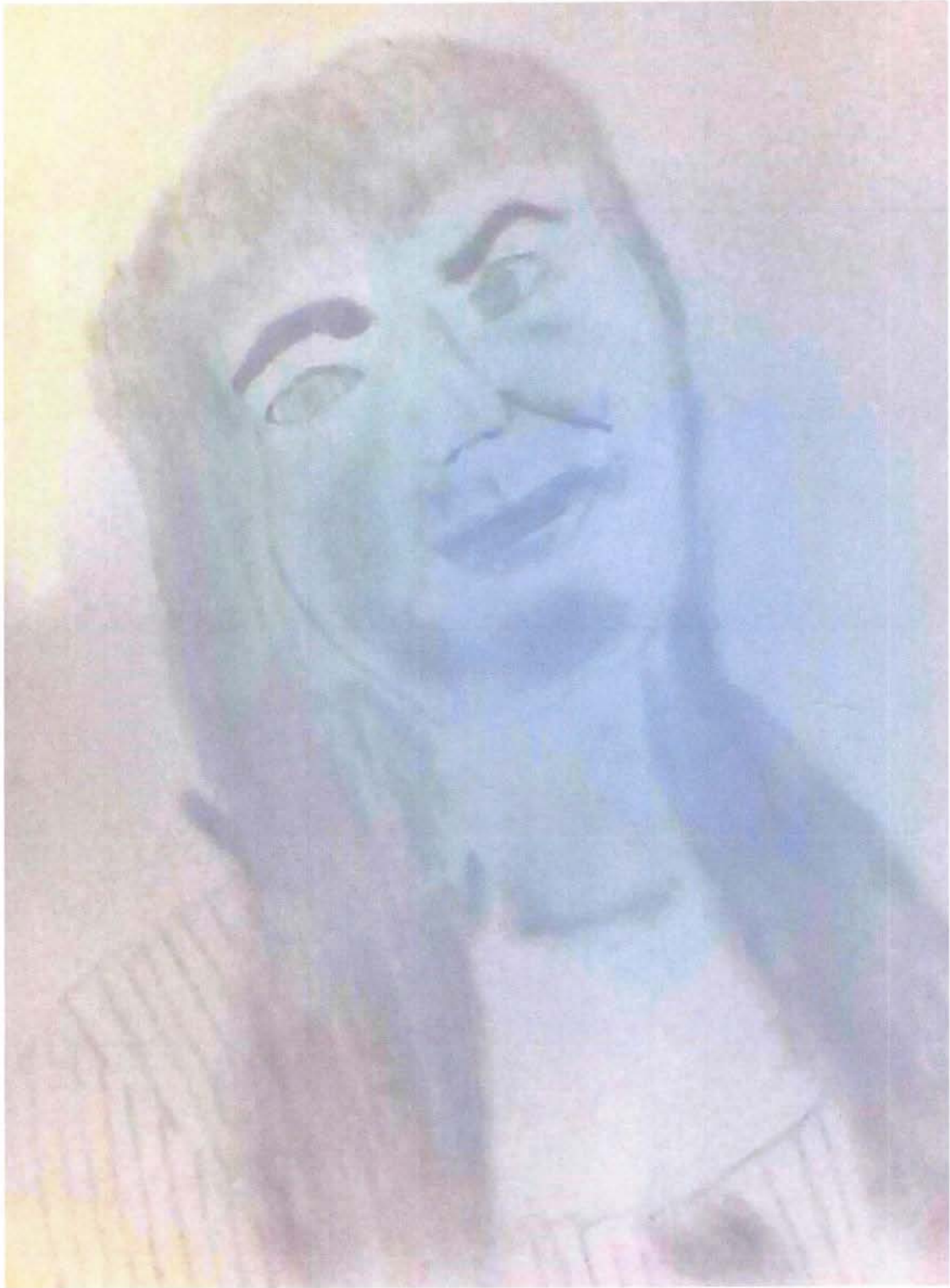




Greek Character I Relate to with Background: Centaur in Mystical Forest

Materials: Sharpie and Colored Pencils

Artist: I B-B



Portrait with Shading

Material: Pencil

Artist: KW



*Are You There?*  
*By Deborah Poyfair*

*Your love, your kindness, your hope, your touch, your warmth, poof... gone.*

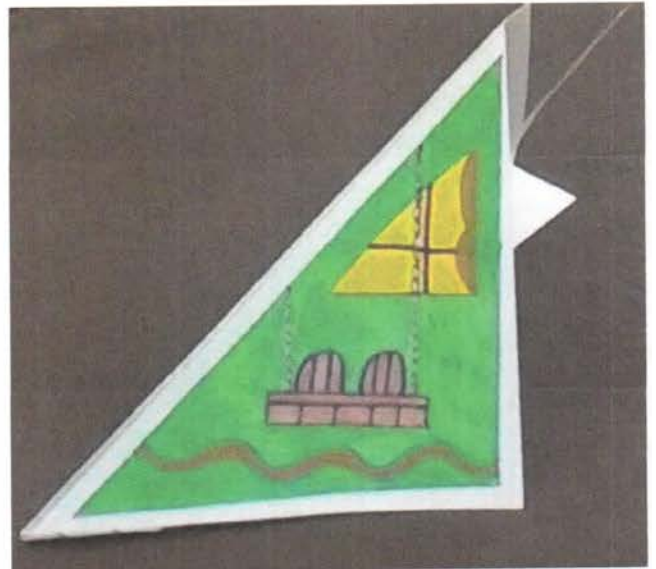
*The way I feel is hard to explain. Do I scream? Do I hide? Do I run? My heart doesn't understand.*

*You're my best friend, my love, my forever. Why do you have to be away? When are you coming back?*

*Behind locked doors I scream. Why can't my emotions settle into one? You're just a daze in my mind, wishing I could feel your arms wrapped around me. Wishing you were here by my side, telling me that it's okay to feel the way I do.*

*I can hear you, I can see you, and I can feel your presence. Is it real? Are you really here?*

*When I open my eyes I snap back into reality...*



Dream House Design

Material: Colored Pencil and Sharpie

Artist: KH



"You wanna go where everyone knows your name"  
Not always the Case

I am the definition of a repeated mistake  
Getting out just to go right back into booking

"Hey Al, Yup, it's Me again"

Phone call at time of admission?

Not necessary, Got no one for Commarary  
Not even your attorney!

Look

I'm not a psychic but you + I both know what my future holds!  
I been doing this too damn long, this been the same damn song!!  
Same Show!!

Like, Can someone please change the damn channel?

Seems like its been stuck on History

Feels like this is a repeat

Everyone knows this is the definition of Insanity

You must be crazy to keep coming back to a place like this

This has got to be a mental illness

Well you heard of set ups? This one was the Best!!

Nudes Nounds at their finest, their damn finest

Richard Cole



Dream House Design

Material: Colored Pencil and Sharpie

Artist: GB





Greek Character I Relate to with Background: Athena with Solar Eclipse

Materials: Colored Pencils

Artist: AW

Incarcerated Individuals that's what they call us and  
Scum of the Earth to 80% of the C.O's they put <sup>us</sup> place  
to watch us... Don't they know we not all cut from the same  
tree??? A lot of us graduated from high school and some  
of us even went to collage... The streets just had a  
More Stronger calling... But that don't make us less  
thar a person or less than you... Yeah I'm talking  
about the C.O's and add a "p" before  
the "S" because it's a lot of cops too...  
A lot of mistakes that we made bad  
choices it's all one and the same... But  
that don't make us less than a  
person, to bet you only know our last  
name??? And that's only because you  
Read it off a paper, Aint that a shame...  
Never judge a book by it's cover, go  
on and Read the first page. You  
might just be surprised when you  
hear what a Incarcerated Individual Really  
has to say...  
Reflections of the thoughts of  
a Incarcerated Individual...  
We are all not the same, to  
wish the world Read the memo





Clay Plate

Materials: Clay and Paint

Artist: SS

ME WITHOUT YOU

IS LIKE A REDE WOOD NO STEAM,

A VOICE WITHOUT A BREAM,

BALSA WOOD WITHOUT ANY STEAM,

LIKE THE EARTH WITHOUT THE MOON,

THE SUN WITHOUT ITS SHINE,

LEAVES FLOWERS THAT DON'T BLOOM,

ME WITHOUT YOU

IS A DRY WITHOUT NEAR,

CANDLES THAT DON'T FLASH OR LIGHT,

A BODY WITH NO LIFE,

A PLACE NOT IN FLIGHT, LIGHTNING WITHOUT A STRIKE,

THE COLD IN THE DARK OF WINTERS,

ENDLESS WHISPERS (and lines... Signis.

ME WITHOUT YOU

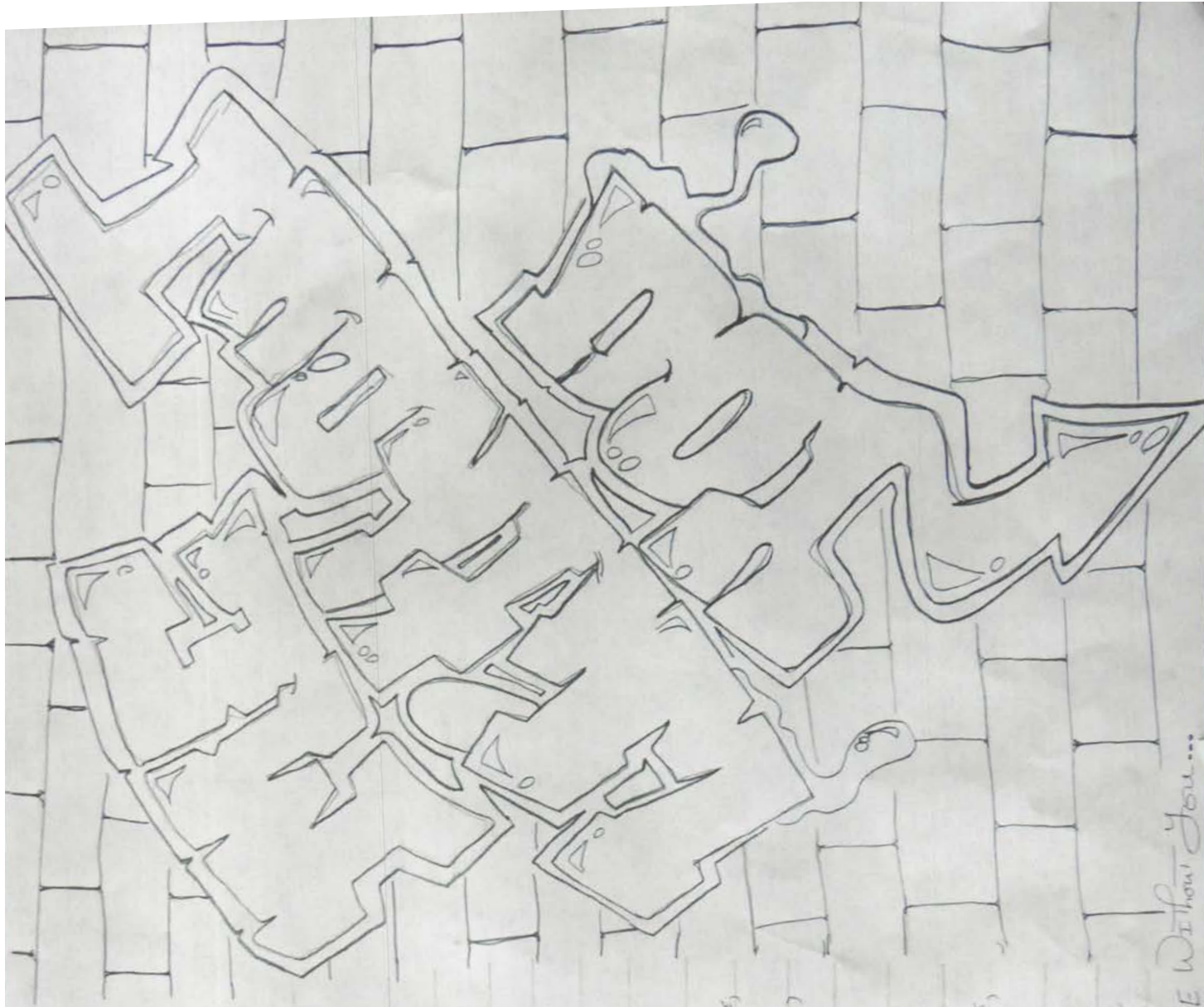
IS LIKE A WILDING WITHOUT A BEAR,

THE OCEAN AT LOW TIDE,

A BABY NO ONE HEARS CRY,

A HEART WITHOUT A HEARTBEAT,

ME AND YOU CAN NEVER BE ME WITHOUT YOU...





## *Forget Me Not*

*Promise not to forget me*

*For it will break my heart you see*

*Please promise never to forget me*

*For it will be the end of thee*

*It'll be the end of spring and summer*

*Winter and fall too*

*Please promise never to forget me*

*And I'll stay yours, always, forever, and true*

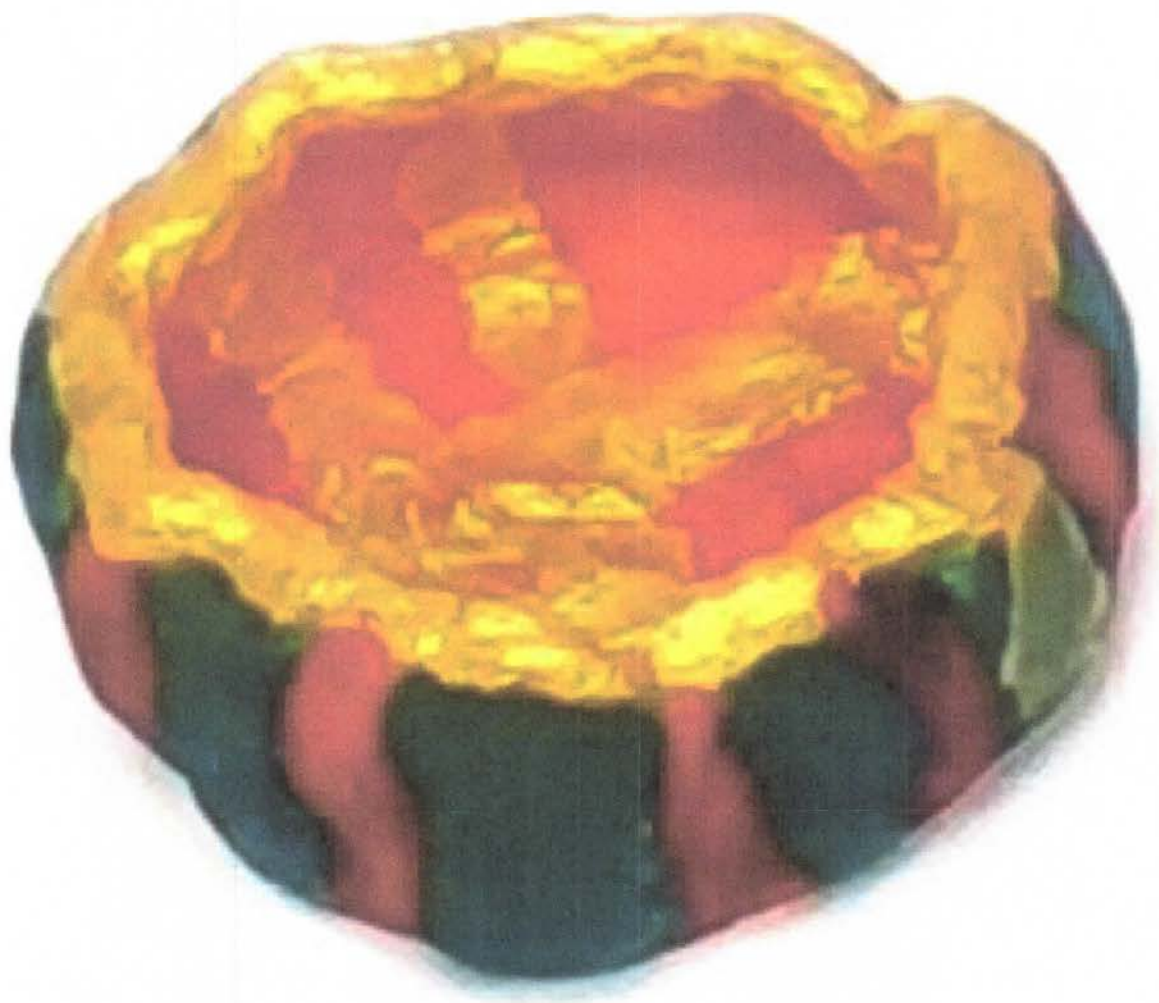
*I'll love you on your grayest days*

*In the most beautiful ways*

*I know we aren't perfect*

*So please don't pretend to be OK*

*As long as you still love me, I promise I'll stay*



Clay Bowl

Materials: Clay and Paint

Artist: BW



### What Mental Health Is Like For Her

Waking up and showering is difficult for her most days...

She is smiling on the outside, but literally dying inside...

They tell her she's beautiful, but she does not believe it. All she sees is fat and ugly...

Easy decisions like what to wear, or what to have for dinner is simple for most but very difficult for her...

Just because she is strong doesn't mean she doesn't get weak...

She is in a room full of people and still feels very much alone...

Wanting to be loved but not really sure how to love...

Living in a world of not knowing where she belongs...

Being so exhausted and wanting to sleep but she is too scared to close her eyes. Scared of what she might see in her dreams or nightmares...

Or, when she sleeps for days simply because she can't find the strength to get up and take on the day...

These are the things some people will never understand because they have never had to feel it and it's something they never see...

I know because she is me.

Remember to be kind to others because you never know what they are going through. And, just because you can't see it, doesn't mean it is not there.



## Time and How it Relates to Us

A person's most precious and valuable commodity is Time. Time is the measurement of a person's life incremented by memories. Time is spent either wisely or wastefully. Time can never be gifted or taken back, therefore Time is non-refundable.

Are you investing or spending your Time wisely and with an eye focused on the future and inevitable after-life?

Jesus said it BEST: What you reap is what you sow. Another words, the choices we make today will become our ~~our~~ reality tomorrow.

Finally, the measure of a man is in direct relation to not what he does in the light, but what he does in the Dark.

Commodity - is defined as someone or something that is valuable. A resource.  
Reap - to get something as a reward or as a result from something done or achieved. Harvest.  
Sow - plant seeds in the ground.





Clay Cupcake Piggy Bank

Materials: Clay and Paint

Artist: NC

## Regret

*As time waits I feel alone  
No place to go, not even home  
I sit here waiting for some news  
Still can't shake the jailhouse blues*

*Curled up in a ball waiting to be free  
Waiting to see how long it takes to see  
These streets, my God, I'm exhausted, absolutely beat  
Don't know how much longer I can handle this*

*Handed down a sentence  
Feel so much regret  
I promise I never meant this  
I'm forever in debt*





Clay Turtle

Materials: Clay and Paint

Artist: AO

## Broken Wing

Winged soul, you danced the skies,  
And started dawn with shrilling cries.  
You followed sails and braved the sea,  
Then caught the wind back to me.

You broke your wing, it dragged the land,  
And etched your mark upon the sand.  
When feathers break, you can't fly.  
But who decides the time to die.  
You disappeared, I know not where.

But your wing marks still linger there.  
A broken heart cannot fly,  
But who decides the time to die.





Faith Ringgold Inspired "Story Quilt" Design

Materials: Collage, Colored Pencil, and Sharpie

Artist: MW

## Worth It

*Have you ever felt worthless  
Sleepless nights and heartbreaks  
Girl I get it, but you're worth it*

*All the sad eyes  
The tears you cry  
The endless lies  
And you don't know why  
Girl I get it, but you're worth it*

*Don't know why you can't compromise  
And you're sick of feeling everything but alive  
All you do is try  
But now is the time to rise  
Girl I get it, but you're worth it*

*Rise above and beyond and never look back  
Keep going forward on your one way track  
Don't ever allow yourself to be trapped*

*Because even though you feel worthless  
Sleepless and heartbroken  
Girl I get it, but you're worth it  
You're chosen*





Landscape: Island Scene with Sunset

Material: Oil Pastel

Artist: NV

# Reflection's

know is a reflection to me? Well it's a person staring back in a mirror at you when you look into it right? The bit it is also more it is a overall outlook on life and the perspective of it, it is the impact you leave on your little ones lives, a reflection good or bad is really part of who a person is believe it or not..

On one side of this paper I wrote a short preview on my life my past and my reflection on it now. on the other is a poem I wrote reflecting on time wasted in jails, wasting out on those I love (time I can not ever get back).

I hope whoever reads these essays them and really take time to think in life before yo act. I got to do some here on out if I wanna leave jails and institutions all behind.

Thanks for reading

(Zachariah Solomon)  
Rob 2 call 15

(Behind cement walls)

- " Behind these walls dogs pass slow through the same nothing at all ever seems to change!  
I've here songs continue living the same routine,  
with only a fall to turn to to know our song."
- " Questions in the mirror George have had you feel,  
my heart knows changed missing words feel,  
my wife my children sit there on the floor,  
I know these words I say on a fallen phone."
- " All there is to do here is think watching others here,  
with a troubled mind you hold no words,  
leave together words might be your like your song,  
missing those you love yourself."
- " To be honest my mind has become a bad place  
really to be,  
everybody I blame myself for my life this ain't me,  
I have got to get out from behind these walls and  
use my words to myself never come back,  
can you do that mind? Can you promise that Zach?"
- " This time here though I believe all sounds my life,  
I know live in drugs as I talk my life,  
I will see the path I was on I would have died,  
and I could my soul when hearing that be died."
- " Behind  
Concrete walls is a place to really gather thought,  
thinking of those you love behind strength,  
Reflections of my past play constantly as I sit,  
I want I use my words being not was the gift."
- " Though behind these cement walls is a place  
no one wants to be,  
missing out of it when I move on freely,  
Behind these cement walls is something I will  
never miss time never come again,  
and how much I promise the my friend!  
poem

by Zachariah Solomon

my story  
I grew up a street kid in Southside Chicago seeing myself basically, it's no wonder I spent myself behind bars as many times as I have. What does one expect from a gang member child forced to raise himself with no help at all but a pistol and so called friends. Through one year friends even fail? So many questions for a child as myself is forced to a life style I never wanted at this time. My father left me and my mother alone to fend for us when I was only 8; Seeing my mother struggle I knew I had to help so my decision was make turn to the hood..the needle cash and fast turn so hostile-us-finally my next step I figured regardless my damn age. So in the George I turned and started ricki and selling drugs by age 9..my way was great but the danger are future outlook on my life was becoming more and more bleak as time went on; looking back now I never should have made it past age 15 my gods grace I did and the weapons I possessed all into; Skating for a little in this city I was shot at age 13 on my neck with a gun shell in south side Chi town all over to my best game had ever..I am amazed all this very reflecting on my past I survived that bullet.. it stuck me though? Hell no I want to visit those who did it planting me in a jury center my teen years you men. Reflecting back on it though I really don't know if anything at all would have changed differently because past made me a better man, father, and about today. Being in jail now is nothing it was misundersanding I will be out for soon. The only I would change though is all the countless years spent caged up in bars because dumb shit like I always made.





Landscape with Color-Blending and Shading

Material: Colored Pencil

Artist: MS





**Thank you to all the facilities who submitted pieces for this year's publication.**

**Visit [nysaiep.org/reflections](https://nysaiep.org/reflections) to submit writing and art for next year's Reflections!**