Voces de Libertad presents:

Youth Speak Out

Poems by Poets

of the Santa Fe County youth detention facility

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These poems were created over a period of over two years by a number of different young people being held, generally for short periods of time, at the Santa Fe County Youth Development Center. The emotion and eloquence that the poems demonstrate are testimony to the strength and positive energy of the youth who wrote them even in the midst of extremely challenging life experiences. Those of us working with these creative poets who have so much to offer their communities have gained a great deal from knowing them and are extremely grateful for the opportunity.

The poetry workshops are a project of Amigos Biblioteca Library at the detention center. The library and its programs are run by volunteers under the 501(c)(3) umbrella of the P-Project of Santa Fe. The poems were exhibited and performed at El Museo Cultural in Santa Fe on September 25, 2016. Our thanks to all who worked so hard to make that event happen.

Demetria Martinez teaches a poetry workshop at the SFCYDC
I COME FROM New Mexico where the music’s good and the chile is hot. Where the sunsets are calm, and the weather is not. It’s sunny one minute and raining the next. I come from where mom’s enchiladas are really the best. I love my state and where I was born, should I leave should I stay, my feelings are torn. I’m from a place, the direction is southwest, where the roadrunners sprint, and night skies seem the best. Something about my state separates me from the rest. And I don’t mean too literal, like Trump building a fence. I’m talking about the inside, my culture, my ambition. I’m going to skyrocket destroy competition. The sunsets, the chile, it’s all my medication. The music, the wind, it feels like meditation.

• C.
I worrie
I worrie about losing my freedom
I worrie about losing my family
I worrie about losing my boyfriend
I worrie about not being able to be with the people I love and care about
I worrie about my mother
I worrie about how I am gonna get off probation
I worrie about if I am gonna start using drugs again
I worrie about having to face the wrong people
I worrie about life
I worrie about having to face YDDC.

• A.

Clueless
Clueless is white
It sounds like unknown creatures in the shadows
It smells like tropical fruit Punch but not knowing which fruit you’re smelling.
It tastes like blended food.
And it feels like a headache.

• L.
Let me tell you about this man that meant everything to me. I don’t know why but his favorite things were hats and horses. Everywhere hats and horses. Every single one was different. There was about 43 hats he had. A lot had horse related images but some had different things. Every day I wish that day he passed away wouldn’t of come. Before he floated into the sky, he told me, “I want you to keep all my hats and take care of them.” And of course I said I would. After I took a look at all his hats in every one of them in the inside smelled exactly like him and on the outside I could just smell that he was doing what he always liked to do.

• A.
I’M FROM MY momma’s stomach.
From the bag around me, and belly cord connected to my tummy.
I’m from the Mexican family, from the one who eats recalentados after a holiday.
I’m from all the memories that flash back in my brain.
From the darkest one that will never fade.
From the Brightest one that will forever make me giggle.
I’m from November
From the hoodies season and colorful nights.
I’m from heroin from the drug they call Dope,
that brought all my goals down.

• E.
EXCITEMENT

EXCITEMENT is a neon yellow,
So bright you’re exploding, like fireworks.
EXCITEMENT sounds like loud music,
   like at a rave party, screaming of Joy.
EXCITEMENT smells just like a new car.
The taste of EXCITEMENT is citrus – a powerful
   kick of energy.
EXCITEMENT feels
like you’re Speeding Down a rollercoaster,
Bursting OUT into air as if you were
   Born Again.

• A.
I COME FROM the sound of a mountain lion crying in the wind high in the mountain.

I come from the anger of my uncles drinking late at night.

I come from the wild roses and setting sun that brings happiness at first sight.

I come from the beautiful blue Arizona skies.

I come from the blue shade in my brothers eyes.

I come from the sad and lonely cry of my grandfather’s guitar.

I come from my grandma’s house which feels so close but yet is so far.

I come from the water that flows peacefully in the stream.

I come from the winds blowing swiftly down the mountain.

But it’s all a dream.

• K.
WITH A MAN I call my king from orange skies
brown eyes  days full of dreams  knocks on the door
awakens  me  begging faces and sad eyes
with a story  though I don’t care to know
what that story is  days like this turn into
awake nights  sometimes in a house I don’t call
a Home  chasing clear dragons or a black sharp
pointed knight  dealing with a begging face
and sad eyes  or a night out in Spaña town
with a man I call my king  although the love
we have isn’t for fairy tales  maybe it isn’t love
at all but lust  we take off on our black Firebird
blue lights on the bottom  pink lights on the inside
sitting on playboy rims with a back windshield that says
“Sinner”  cuz that’s what I guess we are  Sinners
making a name we turn on the system  and go
sometimes out to eat  get my nails done or for just a stroll
to meet the begging faced people with sad story eyes
it seems wrong but the life I lived excites me
live fast die young  and I’m doing well
it shouldn’t be  for me  but it’s all I know
the life I lead with a man I’d call my king.

• L.
Freedom Last

Seeing trees green on the leaves
brown on the branch, hear that
rat-a-tat-tat

Brings no feeling of happy
Rather emotions inside seem
to gather feeling the hate
to me the disgrace, one main
thing change.

In a maze up in the clouds
or even thinking of the outs.
No locks on the doors Bricks on the
walls, browns on my back
need to get away that’s a fact

Done or wait correction to
your proper grammer I’m finished
the system for now, couple years
out of Lock Down.

• C.
Spirit of Peace

Please fill my heart, take away all negativity and hate. I’m tired of having a heavy heart. I want to be free from all temptation and hurt. Help me feel the way I do when I’m free and the way I did when my father held me.

• V.
I come from beautiful Mexico but grew up in New Mexico.
I come from the delicious green and red enchiladas my mom makes.
I come from rap but also love norteñas and dancing to them.
I come from the sirens of the “cops.”
I come from the beautiful mountains and light blue skies.
I come from the rattlesnakes and roadrunners.
I come from the fun parties but the question if I’m going to go back home goes through my mind.
I come from the kill drugs but we don’t think of them that way.

• L.
Gratitude #2

Thank you holy spirit for Earth
For science
For fire
For our eyes so we can
Capture almost every moment
In our lives.

• T.

SADNESS IS LIKE burning grass,
Sadness is black like my dog’s fur.
Sadness happens when you fall.
Sadness sounds like a dog barking loudly.
Sadness disappears when you cry.

• K.
If justice were a tattoo it would have me and everyone walking up stairs with broken shackles going up to the gates of heaven, the gates would be shining brighter than Times Square at 12:00 on New Year’s, it would have angels blowing their horns of glory louder than the Super Bowl at the last minute.

God would be standing at the gate with his arm open meaning, “welcome back home my children.”

• B.
I Love the Ocean
For the ocean is bright blue lit by the sun
The sun has courage to light all isolated places
For I am an isolated place I do not open up like a book
A book that has courage to fill itself with courageous words
Courageous words that give me discipline
With discipline I cannot be distracted.
• J.
Who Am I

As I stare in the mirror
I see this young lady
Who is very smart
I can see it
In her eyes
I see love
And potential
In her heart
I also see beauty
In her face.
She’s bright like the sun.
Happy like a rainbow.

Who is this young lady
I see in the mirror?

Could this be me?

• J.
I COME FROM Spaña New Mexico where there’s a good friday every year you can kick back and walk and see the nice rides pass by and see the low riders hitting there switches at the parking lot at walmart and later night we kick back play games with my family kick back outside and see the sky.

SAD COMES FROM the tears in my eyes. The color of sad is dark purple it comes from a dark place like when a girl gets hit in the face by a weak man. Every time I mess up I feel sad ‘cause they lock me up in this jail cell away from my family. The sad sounds that I hear is the sound of my mom’s voice crying in tears. But when I get home I see my mom’s beautiful face with a smile on it.

• O.
Impatience

Impatience is a dull
Brown, so boring, you feel so

Bored.

It sounds like a ticking
time bomb,

Because how much boredom can one person take?

Impatience smells like a wet dog that won’t ever dry.

Tastes like copper pennies.
But when you’re impatient, it feels as if Time has stopped.

Joyful

Joyful is maroon.

It sounds like bells

It smells like cinnamon

It tastes like homemade biscochitos!

And it feels like butterflies in your tummy. You have to hold on to something before you can float away.
IF JUSTICE WERE
a road it would be clean
and wide and brand new,
and bright and light,
with no cops.

If justice was a song
it would have a sick
beat, it would rhyme,
and would be soft,
peaceful and calm,
and long with no ending
to the song.

• J.