

# THE INSIDERS COOP

Produced by the participants of the John Howard Society literacy program:  
The best of prison literacy and art, created by inmates for inmates

March 2011

## MY POEM

Comfort within this cold concrete embrace  
Mistakes, wishing I could erase  
All the struggle and the strife  
Love with abuse, that was my life  
Repair to restore  
I've done this many times before  
Standing alone, fearing the unknown  
Even though I was all grown  
Time to reflect  
Finally realizing the hurtful neglect  
All this harsh insight  
Making me want to make life right  
Taking this moment as a gift  
To see how I was so adrift  
Sure my life seems so much longer  
But it's only going to make me stronger  
Ready for my anticipating day  
When I'll finally be on my way  
Determined to succeed  
Ignoring all the evil greed  
Prayers of strength and hope  
So I'll be ready to finally cope  
Mine one true final goal  
If I happen to forget or stumble  
I'll just get back up and be always humble

*Melanie Rose Azure  
M.R.A.*



**IN THIS ISSUE:** Literacy program updates, the 2011 poetry contest announcement, and more poems than you know what to do with. Enjoy!



THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY  
OF MANITOBA, INC.

# FROM THE EDITOR

Greetings readers! Hope you enjoy this issue. Here's a quick run-down of what's new at JHS:

As I mentioned in the last edition of the *Scoop*, the JHS literacy program is unfortunately no longer open to the entire WRC. Where in the past we offered literacy tutoring to students on all floors, we've recently had to scale back to working only on 400B.

If you're on a different floor, you can still participate in the "Get the Story Out" Program (details below), or submit writing and art to the *Inside Scoop*.

Note also that we're beginning our third annual "Speaking Out From the Inside" poetry contest, and details and entry form are on page 11. The winners will be chosen by a panel of local celebrity judges, who will be

announced in the next issue of the *Scoop*.

Although JHS is offering literacy only on one floor, our reintegration services department continues to work with all WRC inmates. Contact Linda (775-1514) if you need info on housing, treatment programs, pre-release planning, or other community resources.

Reintegration services offers an anger management program at the John Howard Society office at 583 Ellice Avenue. A new session begins this spring, so call us to register.

JHS also has a clothing closet at our office, where anyone in need of new-to-you duds can come and get pants, shirts, shoes, jackets and other winterwear.

JHS is also involved this year in organizing events for International Day Against Police Brutali-



ty, a day to raise awareness about police violence and misconduct, and propose solutions. We took part in the annual IDAPB rally on March 19th, and are now inviting submissions of artwork and writing that represents citizens' experiences with police violence and their visions for a safer community. These will be used in a public awareness campaign. Contact Jacquie at 775-1514 if you'd like to contribute, or if you'd like more information.

Until next time, happy reading!

Jacquie Nicholson  
Literacy Coordinator, JHS

## Hey Dads, Want to Read to Your Kids From Jail?



The John Howard Society has a story-books-on-tape program, where fathers in Remand Centre can record themselves reading a story, and send the recording and book to their child (or niece or nephew, or little brother or sister...).



The program is free and open to everyone, as long as you don't have a no-contact order relating to your child or child's caregiver, and as long as your child's caregiver consents to the gift.

If you are interested, contact Jacquie Nicholson at 775-1514 ext. 303, or write "Get the Story Out Program" on a green request form and send it to John Howard Society. (For female readers, Elizabeth Fry Society offers a similar program. Contact them at 589-7335).

# POETRY

## FREEDOM

Someday I'll be free  
Standing by you with my two feet  
Time makes us suffer for the great  
Fighting only worsens while I'm in this place  
The daily punishment  
Us inmates go through  
Is all worth it  
Unless you choose to leave me too  
Living from time to time  
In this suspense  
Knowing you're still out there  
Waiting for me  
Puts my mind to rest  
My future belongs with you  
All I need to do is hold you  
Counting down to the day  
I'll see your face  
It will be the best feeling ever  
Plus walking past the gate  
I'll come home to you  
Soon I'll be with you

To my soon to be  
*Love Elsie Bushie*

## ATTENTION: WRITERS AND ARTISTS

The *Scoop* wants to hear  
from you!

Send your poems, stories, letters, and  
artwork to:

The Inside Scoop  
583 Ellice Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3B 1Z7

## BELL-EVE

It was said if you believe you can achieve  
So I read to seek a higher learning  
Fook white hoods and cross burning  
But God saids forgive  
And love your enemy's kids as your own  
So let bygones be bygones and let's move on.  
For my folk for my loaks and for my chill smoke  
A nation waiting for change a new world order  
To rearrange the game.

One love  
One god  
One folk  
Peace.

*Dwayne Birchwood*



## ANOTHER STORY

Inside I'm angry all the time,  
Always locked up because of my crimes.

Nothing really matters anymore,  
That's why I wonder what life is for.

Who will care for a broken man,  
Still hoping for a better plan?

Laughing out loud to hide my pain,  
I'm not bad, just a little insane.

Scarred up body and getting grey hair,  
All I know is that nothing is fair.

Getting into trouble without any fear,  
Because I know the end is near.

At least my heart can't be broken because it is gone,  
Just another story from anther con.

*Robin Bousquet*

## SHE'S GONE, BUT NOT FOR LONG

It's not that we expect  
our parents to live forever,  
But even though the death of a parent can  
happen at any time,  
We have trouble talking about death at all  
times.  
My relationship with my mother was amazing  
as I thought it would be.  
I knew my mom for eight years in my life.  
In those eight years, it was fine, not like a  
happy, perfect relationship, but it was fine.  
She took care of me,  
I depended on her throughout my childhood,  
If only that dependence kept going into  
adulthood.  
But she didn't last long in my life.  
When your parents die, there is no  
replacement...  
It leaves a huge hole when they go.  
My foster parents are always worried  
that the grief won't ever stop and know that  
they lost the old me.  
That came true.  
I know that if I had my mother for five or ten  
more years,  
we would have worked things out.  
I have learned that I am very much my  
mother's daughter.  
For example, her independence, her strength  
increased mine;  
her stubbornness was matched by my own.  
It took her death to teach me more than  
anything to date,  
that life is short and unfair.  
No matter long that relationship can be, both  
never and forever.  
But as I learn this, why do I fill my loss with  
this addiction?  
There was a time when I would have  
considered my mother to be the last person on  
earth who could teach me these lessons.  
But in her death she has.

Dedicated to Martha Caroline Miles  
Rest in Paradise, Mom

*Revonne Tyvilla Miles*  
*AKA Ray-Ray #15*

## MOTHER

You weren't there  
So many times I was alone  
Acting as an adult  
I was not a woman yet  
It was very scary  
I lost my virginity  
You weren't there  
One day you came along  
I was not alone no more  
Back to being a child  
Doing what children do  
Acting as a child should  
Then I became a woman  
But yet still a child  
You were there  
Now I can sleep in peace.



*Mary E. Thomas Mercedes, aka G6*

## WISH U WUR HERE

Ur still wit me even tho I know ur gone,  
Cuz our bond wuz beyond unbreakable.  
I wish I wuz capable 2 change wut wuz fatallly  
fateful.  
But I remain faithful in wut we made together!  
So ur name will forever be remembered,  
Cuz in me u'll never be forgot about,  
Like no doubt people no nuttin' about da issuez,  
They tryinna doubt how much dat I miss u.  
I wish u wur me nd I wuz u,  
Cuz I luv u and would do anythin' 4 u the way  
brotherz do!  
Thur will never be another in my life,  
Every1 wuz rite when they said we're so much  
alike!  
So I write thiz 4 da both of us,  
Cuz I spoke 4 us str8 from heart,  
I hopez they wouldn't break us apart!  
I start 2 wish I couldn't stop'd u da nite you left,  
Or join'd u in ur journey in ur life after death.  
Cuz after you left my perspective wuz hectic,  
I felt disrespected nd want'd 2 act out recklessly.  
Cuz successfully thiz stress got da best of me,  
But thiz is my best stress release,  
I love u, Cuz, Rest in Peace!

*Chase*

## AS AN ABORIGINAL

As an Aboriginal  
I want to gain our political status  
And stop all the havoc,  
want rez people to start living lavish  
Start caring  
and stop adopting all these bad habits  
Start being Aboriginal proud  
no reason to be living savage  
That's a name we adopted  
it's not ours we gotta drop it  
Liquor and stones  
provide broken homes it's a toxic  
"What do kids do?"  
nothing they can do but watch it  
Kids be smart kids they learn  
how about teaching a different topic  
Guns and murder, sniff bags  
paints a picture of hopeless  
But hope is found in the hearts  
I know that you know this  
We destructing our own selves  
now don't act like you don't notice  
I'm doing this for all our legends we have  
in those black and white photos  
The ones who died for being proud  
all of them Great Late Chiefs  
They would hate beef in their eyes  
we living shamefully  
I read on Leonard Peltier  
and Leonard Peltier's words saved me  
I ain't gonna stop these lectures  
till I know our rez kids be living safely...

*Monte Bull*

## ASHES AND EMBERS

Nothing left but ashes and embers,  
Resonating little warmth.  
We have to keep feeding the fire  
to maintain the warmth it once provided.  
Time has elapsed  
and intimacy has subsided.  
Neither one has the desire to carry out,  
as that last ember burns into ash.  
Thus, ash becoming one with the earth again.

*Anonymous*

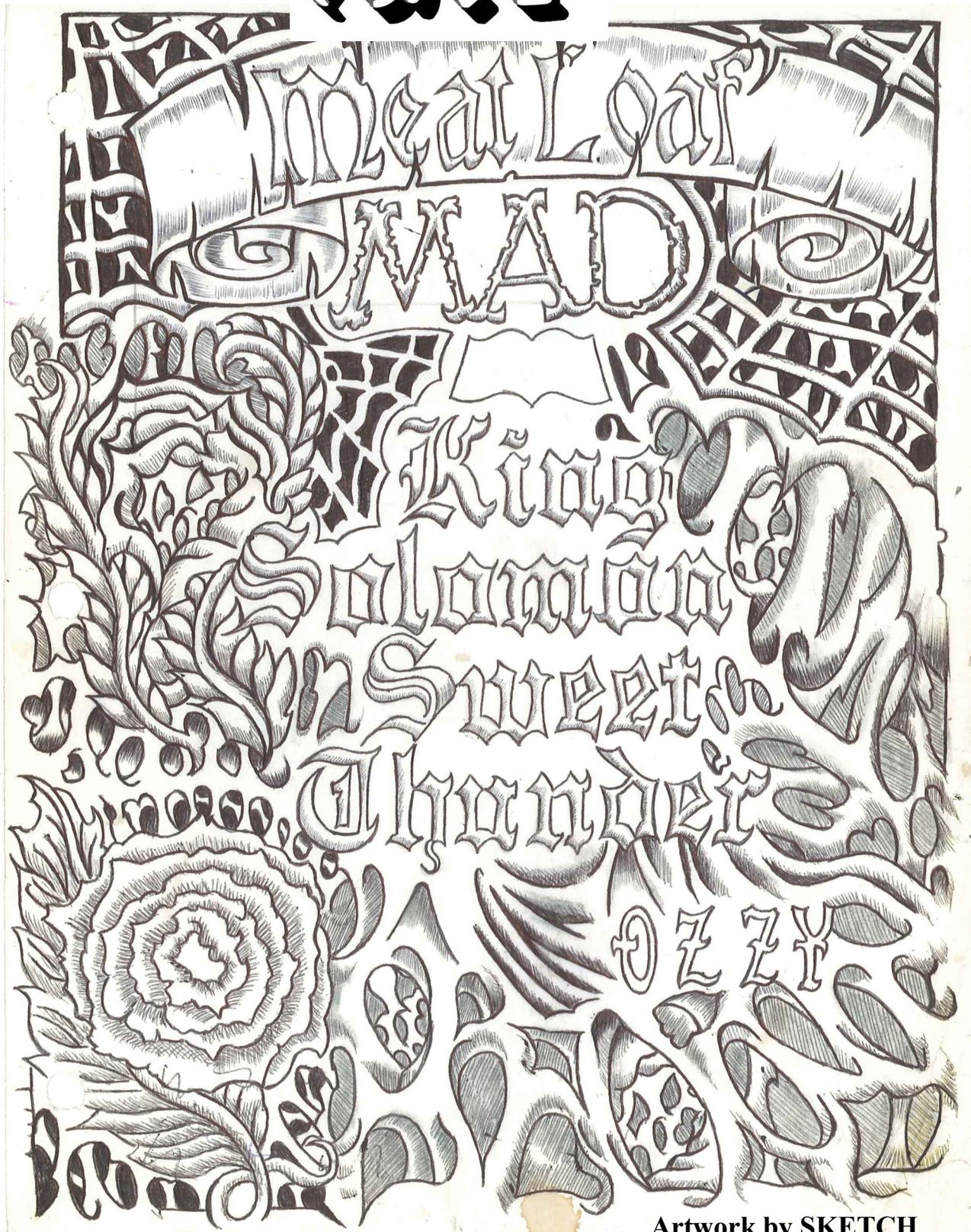


## TAKEN AWAY

Time given, taken or wasted away.  
Becomes a tangled plethora of misfortune, guilt, remorse,  
a painful stay.  
Time and love are wanted, granted and taken away.  
Like a thief in the night, what was once pure and sacred,  
becomes soiled and unwanted,  
cast aside for a belief, a lie,  
that the next sanctified, chosen one,  
will lift fears, blunders and doubt.  
So once again, time will be granted  
and go forth  
to a new, but old hope and faith,  
to glorify not just words of love,  
but the anguish invested in time  
that may be taken away.

*James the MC*

STUDENT  
**ART**



Artwork by SKETCH



### RED ONE

Inside a house of flesh and bone  
Legion rests and finds a home.  
And a soul as black as well,  
Sings songs to make a soul to sell.  
Lying among the shallow grave  
Gaining strength the day to brave.  
A loving time among his kin  
'Fore the time of the man of sin.  
Every shakra is a sentry  
Yet only the worse will gain the entry,  
With every breath  
a different demon speaks,  
Even with one and all the more they seek.  
Prophesy: this one's train  
masks a Red Wake  
So pray with fear and trembling, the Lord  
your soul to take,  
And when the risk of the Red One is near,  
You may be passed over, nought to fear.

*Anonymous*

### MIND, SOUL AND MONEY

Three Sixty Five, as the days go by.  
Time waits for no one and now you know why.  
Incarceration is not where we plan to be.  
It's the consequence of our actions,  
for acting carelessly.  
We're gone for a minute, and it ain't no paradise.  
Our minds rehabilitated, ready to reroll life's dice.  
Life's rollin' on, gamble with the right choice.  
What's done is done, we did what we did.  
All to live good, all to be Hood Rich.  
Work like a slave, and you'll eat like a king.  
Put your heart in your hustle  
and you'll want for nothing.  
Tomorrow's too far to think what could be.  
And thinking about yesterday  
will make you go crazy.  
So live for today,  
and take it one day at a time  
Keep love in your heart, and money on your mind!

*KaylaCakes*

# Dear Inner Child,

*An anonymous letter from a writer  
to her childhood self*



I am deeply sorry for what happened to you as a child. I can never erase the memories of what you went through. I can see it in my mind like it was yesterday. This is your dark side because it is so terrible. I know you are ashamed and hiding everything. I know that nobody talked about it even though lots of people knew. It has hidden and that hurt you even more.

I am angry your parents. I am angry at M. who did this. They should have been better parents taking care of you. I am also mad at C. because she rejected you. She would send you away from the house. She and her husband didn't want you. I hope some day you can hear her speak about this time and find the answers you need. A baby brother should be cared for and loved. She did care for other children. I am very sad that you have carried this hurt.

I know how lonely you were and how lost you were all alone. This was wrong. It is very sad. I cry for you, even today. A big family but no one around. It makes me so sad! I know you have so many questions and I pray you get answers. I, too, am alone and tired of being alone. Even as I go to court, I have to think my family doesn't give a shit. I know your sadness.

If they had not rejected you, maybe your future would be entirely different. Maybe happy. Maybe wealthy! Living with joy on the right path. We can never know but we can't help but think.

Your brothers were in jail and this is how you learned to be. Nobody is there for you to help you learn the right things and that is both wrong and sad.

I am sad because the abuse took away your feelings and prevented you from being able to feel love. This is awful. A child should care and that

caring was taken from you.

I want to make your life good and I want you to have a chance to grow up and you can do it now. There is a better life now for you and I can provide that for you. Your family can be proud of you. You can succeed. You can do the things you want to and be happy. The things your sister said and did were harsh. I want you to be able to turn off those messages and hear the good ones I have for you.

You can go back to school. You can do great things as an administrative assistant. You have a great touch with other people. You have that gift, you just have to find a place to use it! You can continue and have a sober life with a nice house in a safe place and live with people you love.

This is about you, little follower, it is for you. This good life is for you not for others. You deserve this good life and I will give it to you.

I am also angry at your mom's family and how they rejected you too because of your femininity. They said you made them ashamed because you were gay. You did not deserve this.

I know you can't wait to leave. There is a life beyond the res — a better life. You deserve to live free and be who you are. There are always things to look forward to in life.

You are not to blame. You are innocent and you will be protected by me. I know you need to be protected. As I give you life now, you are safe with me. I will never hurt you. I love you. I like who you are and I accept you as a two-spirited individual. And those who don't, that is their problem. Their loss!

Love, ISP

## DO YOU NOW SEE

I wish the rain can fall on me, as it would for you.  
The sun drying you, as it for me.  
I know you're walking around but where?  
And so freely,  
This I cannot see.  
Tears are falling,  
I blow kisses hoping it will reach.  
Hurt, madness and now remorse  
behind these brick walls.  
Same old things every day, being chained when  
we misbehave.  
Always hearing the doors open and shut,  
wondering if it's me that will be freed.  
The guards call someone's name,  
There goes my hope, shoved back down the drain.  
Dreaming of you in the distance,  
can't seem to get to you.  
Tears are really starting to flow,  
the love I have for you  
Is like a waterfall, it does not slow.  
The places I dream of, you're always there.  
Do you now see?  
I dream someday of being free.  
Wanting to get my love, my only.

*Traper P. Cook*



## REAL EYES, REALIZE, REAL LIES

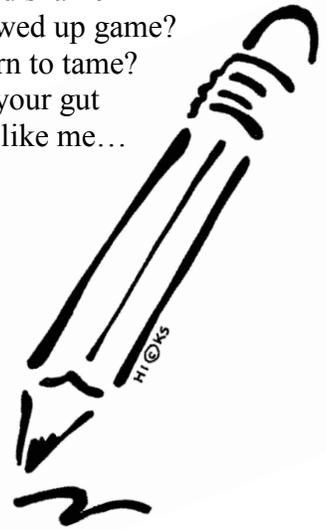
I feel defeated, like I was cheated...  
my life flashes before my eyes  
and now all I do is cry.  
How could I have done something so wrong,  
my life was nothing but a lie all along.  
Now I will sit and do my time  
because it was I who committed the crime.  
I don't feel sorry for myself  
it was the way the cards were dealt.  
No one could understand what I've been through  
all the cheating, beating, lies and cries,  
Now I can finally say goodbye!  
Why did it have to end this way  
When all I feel is hurt and shame  
Is life nothing but a screwed up game?  
Something you gotta learn to tame?  
All I can say is listen to your gut  
Otherwise you'll end up like me...  
Fucked!

*Carolyn Sinclair*

## POEM ADDICT

I'm a poem addict,  
wrote two poems a day  
I hope no one takes  
my pencil away  
Like a mastermind plotting a caper  
I enjoy putting, my thoughts to paper  
I write about joy, I write about sorrow  
I'm still not sure, what I'll write tomorrow  
Just give me a word and a little time  
I'll try my hardest to find one to rhyme  
Give me a topic, a pad and a pen  
A place to sit down, and I will begin  
A poem for a laugh, a poem for a cry  
A good poem can put a tear in your eye  
A poem for your daughter, a poem for your son  
I never knew poems could be this much fun  
Poem for your lady, I'll write for you gent  
And if you paid me, it's money well spent  
I have a question, can you tell me friend  
Me writing these poems, will it ever end  
I'm a poem addict, I'm out of control  
Too bad no one needs a poet on payroll.

*Robert Wilson*



## 6 YEARS AWAY

Constantly moving,  
Trying to find a new spot  
Where a new trend's hot  
Where everybody's  
two cents  
Is spent on good sense  
Hey! Did you get props?  
When you used hip hop  
To send shivers  
through the Go Getters  
You can use this... Not!  
You're the nonsense, stop!  
Constantly moving  
To improve my  
wristwatch  
I'm the soon to be made  
It'd be crazy if I stayed  
Minimum wage paid  
Just pacin' in a cage  
Filling with rage  
So enabled to be great  
Watch the tables get  
changed  
With the verbal assault  
From the gerbil in a cage  
Dat learned to surge up  
on a page  
Through these 6 years  
away.

*Too Tone*

## MY LOVE

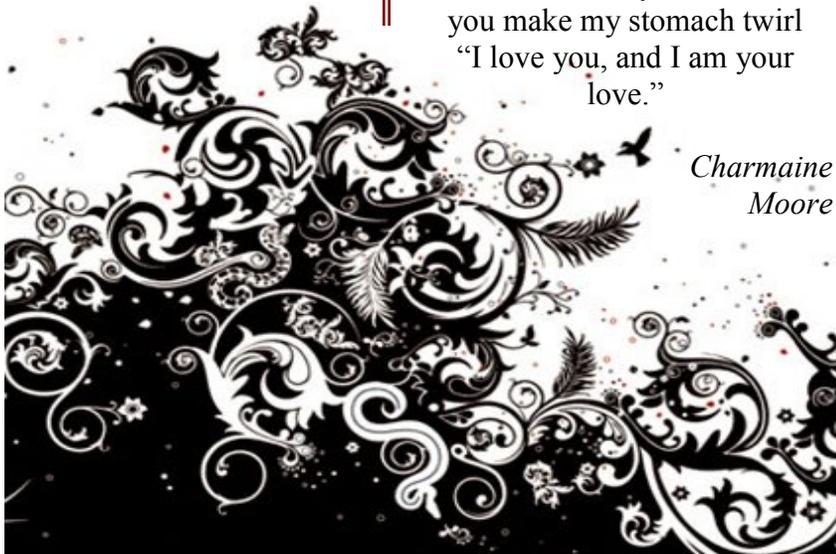
I never knew  
I could love a man so much  
Letting my heart spill  
without a fuss  
I can't explain in words  
what you mean to me?  
You make me mad, sad, but  
together we're happy in the end  
To you, my mind, my soul,  
my heart I send  
That's what I love about you  
You don't sit there and pretend  
I express my love to you in so  
many weird ways  
Sometimes you stop and say  
"Baby, that's kinda gay."  
But it means a lot to me  
You make me open my eyes  
and see  
That you're my love,  
forever and always  
You pick me up when I'm down  
You make me smile, when I  
have a frown  
Even when you have to act out  
like a clown  
I guess these are the words  
saying  
"I love you" and you're my love  
I hurt and sit and cry  
With times like that, you  
become the most loving guy  
You are my world,  
you make my stomach twirl  
"I love you, and I am your  
love."

*Charmaine  
Moore*

## GOD

You make me feel like a somebody  
Instead of a nobody  
Like there's a purpose to my life  
I feel so happy,  
tears fall beneath my eyes  
Not tears of pain, nor tears of hate  
The same tears that fell,  
when overjoyed  
Like the first time  
I carried my baby boy  
The feelings I felt  
were so divine  
I gave my thanks,  
when I looked up high  
And the smile, I smiled that very day  
Is a smile that no other can replace  
Still I think of my baby boy  
And I pray he's doing well  
As for me, I get lost in thought  
As I lay here in my cell  
Thinking of all I've gained,  
and all I've lost  
Feeling pain, so I pray to God  
God, give me strength,  
and guide my way  
So I won't come back,  
to this lonely place  
Give me faith and give me hope  
So I can someday watch  
my children grow  
For my ex, god give her peace  
Let all her pain become deceased  
Open her eyes, so she may see  
And send her  
someone who's better than me  
A better partner, a better dad  
Give her what she thinks  
she'll never have  
As for me,  
I know my path  
I thank you god,  
for all I have.

*Frank Chartrand*





## 3rd Annual “Speaking Out From the Inside” Poetry Contest

The John Howard Society’s *Inside Scoop* is holding its third annual poetry contest, which is open to anyone who is currently incarcerated or who has been incarcerated in the last year. Participants can submit **one poem only**, one page long or less, for a chance to win a gift certificate to local bookstore McNally Robinson. There is no entry fee! Simply fill out the form below, tear it out of the *Inside Scoop*, and send it, along with your poem, to The John Howard Society, 583 Ellice Avenue, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7, or, if you’re in WRC, write “Inside Scoop Poetry contest” on a request form and ask to see Jacquie Nicholson, JHS literacy coordinator. **The deadline for entries is August 1, 2011.**

### Entry Form

Please fill out all sections of the form, or your poem may not be eligible. If you have questions you may contact Jacquie at 775-1514 ext. 303.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you currently in custody in a jail or prison? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, which one? \_\_\_\_\_

If no, when were you last in custody and where? \_\_\_\_\_

If we print your poem in the *Inside Scoop* or some other publication, what name would you like to appear next to your poem? (You can use your full name, first name, a nickname, whatever you want)

\_\_\_\_\_

Provide a phone number we can contact you at if you are no longer in custody when the contest winners have been chosen. This could be your home phone number, a cell phone number, or the phone number of a family or friend who will know how to get a hold of you.

\_\_\_\_\_

Please sign and date below to give us permission to print your poem in the next edition of the *Inside Scoop*, which is distributed in institutions and in the community, and also appears on the JHS website. We will be printing the winning poems, and also as many of the runner-ups as we can fit!

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Check this box if you would like to have your poem used in other JHS publications, such as workbooks and facilitation manuals, handouts in groups, or for future fundraising projects.

Time to help improve the clarity of my friend's day I can only by **by offering to help in any way** to experience the pain of a beloved friend when I'm half a world away its well worth the wait

She is the pinion of angelic reason for me and the rest of mankind to believe in her heart and mind **is nothing of refined and I'm absolutely grateful to have such beauty by my side** in her confidence I'm conscienceless when it comes to revealing the personal aspects of my life and that's alright

**The repetitiousness** of my prison migraine reverberates enough critical vibes to fracture the concrete bone that we cons call home for now

Life expectancy rate of violet to be kissed into action and embraced into forever stumble upon list concupiscence I sneeze **from the dust of tryst** after being deprived of love and life

**Too close to see the ambitious sea flowing** within the depths of me can you feel this growing tranquility?

The moment I found my way into **you countenance of ethereal** and how it made me feel

**Without your love** that familiar black sadness would once again start again anew

When I'm left flustered caught within a frustrated moment in my day **I envision the precision of that impeccable smile** and quickly realize that the way I am right now doesn't have to be that way

It's the time I had thought of you majestic and red gorgeous as the dahlias beside our bed **a bouquet of tender kisses** all though my head

I can't remember the time where me and you were **placed side to side with happiness flowing as life** ought to be we were together proud shining so brightly in the indigo wash of my lovers pen I think of the happenings now and then

**It's the height of our touch that spreads like the hands of dew** I love you to the grounds of not loving you then I'm a friend who will expend the conditions that mend a lonelier heart no more you are the woman I adore

**My affection for a love** that is so fascinating for she is the apple in god's eye but total mystery in mine which I don't mind

**I'd love to be as enlivening** as that rare vaccine given to a sick child in need my purpose being here to cut short but remembered by a sweet ending

Golding strands shroud us in magnificent plans and **albino grain of the diadem brain it's a wonderful work so why complain Time is her wanting and how she devoured all the starts and left us wondering whether or not they would return back** lithe as the summers breath we thank god for whatever's left into the depth of her passing eyes we catch glimpses of what the problem is or where the solution lies

Time can move words into different hues like a polished pebble that is encouraged to take that final step onto the beach **soon you'll embraced by a force that will continue to teach**

This time **I choose to see the sunrise** instead of the countenance of disdain airing out friendliness instead of superiority of pain

Today **my memory's been feathered by her magically lit gesture whatever be the remainder I'll always hold and treasure** laughter cured the flower that wilt sunshine covers the pain she will stay with me until the present lives again

Its like **some stars** are to faint to see but up close you can see how wonderful they can be

Time is the stentorian orchid that **wakes itself from sleep** and finds itself in waters deep

*Delaney Bruyere*

## **GEDDY I LOVE YOU BABY!**

Going the distance to think about you Every day I'm wondering what you do Do you think about me like I do you? Do you be sneaky and do what I asked you not to? You probably wonder the same too.

I am gonna say don't worry baby I'm all yours.

Lusting for your love has got me crazy Over you, realize I love you, cuz we are both Very crazy like that, the perfect match for Each other, like 2 peas in a pod.

You make my heart content, no other One will make me feel the way you do, Until you are released I will wait, I love you.

Baby know this truly 100% no one compares As I sit here looking at your picture Babe you are the bestest I want you to know You complete me like the stars complete the sky!

*To Geddy G  
From Myra B*



# THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA, INC.