UPON AWAITING REDEMPTION

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POEMS

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TO THE READER

Greetings,

The writings and poems you are about to read are inspired by my true life events. I would like to share with you a brief glimpse into my life so that although your experience of my writings will be uniquely yours, you may perceive the origin of my inspiration.

I grew up on the southeast side of Fresno California. I was raised in a household with both my mother and father along with two beautiful and loving sisters. My family's status could be classified as middle class, we didn't have a lot of money, but we weren't poor. My father worked and my mother stayed at home with us and ran a small daycare. Outside the walls of our house, I grew up around drug dealers, gangsters, pimps, and cold-blooded killers. The likes of which were not only unavoidable but embraced with love and devotion, as some were the same bloodline as I, my family. At the same time, there were several people in my life who were wise, intelligent, religious, and belonged to the so-called higher class of society. I was fortunate to attend a performing arts middle school as well as a performing arts high school. I played the piano and saxophone, I was in jazz bands, concert choirs and show choirs, I was trained in theatrical arts where I performed in theaters sharing stages with the likes of Audra McDonald and such. However, I was always torn between street life and the so-called square life. As a teenager, I constantly flirted with danger and crime usually under circumstances involving the pursuit of financial gain.

Through it all, throughout my whole life, the most predominant factor has been females. I had my first girlfriend at the age of eleven and immediately fell in love with the intrinsic aura of all women. By the time I was in my late twenties, I had already slept with hundreds of women. That is not said in a boastful manner but as an accurate depiction. Some may have described my
appetite for women as obsessive, I myself recognize it as a few steps beyond excessive. I was considered to be a mac, or a player, but I was consumed by it. I felt as if it was out of my control, more like a glorified curse. I can't tell you how many hearts I broke or how many females I made cry, but it was like a game to me.

My life took a turn in 1997 when at the age of 19 I signed a two year contract to join the U.S. Navy. I was stationed in San Diego CA, but the Navy just wasn't for me... A friend of mine who was serving with me got kicked out and moved in with his prostitute girlfriend at a shady motel on the "hoe stroll" where I would visit them frequently. One day his girlfriend told me that some of the girls were asking about me. I wasn't really trippin on it until she explained that they were prostitutes looking for a pimp. I had no firsthand experience in that game but I was naturally intrigued. She schooled me on what to do and say if one of them approached me. Sure enough, a few days later I was approached by three of them at the same time. Two asked me what they would have to do to be with me, but before I could answer, the third, more experienced than the other two, reached into her bra and pulled out about five hundred dollars and gave it to me with the words, "I choose you." She turned to the other two and told them they would have to do the same thing. Just like that, I was in the game. We traveled from city to city for a few weeks, even though I didn't really know what I was doing, but I was making money and that's all that mattered to me. That endeavor ended with all of us getting arrested in Orange County. It turned out that one of the females was underage, so I ended up going to jail and being sentenced to probation even though I thought she was 18. Unfortunately, that incident did not discourage me enough to stop.

When the internet started poppin, the sophistication level went up and so did the money. For a long while I was having it my way, nice cars, nice house,
money, beautiful women, all things which to me at the time reflected success. When I try to recall all the females I pimped, I come up with the number thirty something. Again, I'm not boasting about any of it, because while some may perceive the nature of my exploits as luster, or unique status of prestige, it does something to the soul which in the absence of a lengthy description is simply evil.

Over the years, I developed a very bad gambling habit. As quick as I would make money is as quick as I would lose it. My life went on like that for about fifteen years, accumulative of tales resembling fantasy and fiction with the allure of mystery but manifested in reality.

My gambling addiction coupled with all the things that came along with my lifestyle drove me to the brink of insanity. I was tired of going in circles and tried to part ways with the female that was with me at the time. She didn't want me to leave, she stood in the doorway blocking my exit with a sword in her hands. Her arms were outstretched pointing the sword toward me, the look on her face was confused and emotional, but serious. As my arm reached around her toward the doorknob, the sword entered my flesh. Obviously I survived, but that event pushed me over the edge, for a brief while I believe I actually did go insane. I was messing up real bad, doing things totally out of my normal character. In the middle of all that, both my parents got sick at the same time. My father had a massive stroke, and while he was in the hospital recovering, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. I moved in with them to provide care, this was in 2011. I was mad at everyone and everything. My actions during that period of time landed me where I am today, in prison for the rape of two prostitutes which I did not commit, sentenced to life, condemned to die where I am, but fighting for freedom.

Upon awaiting redemption, I often reminisce, these are the words and thoughts that come to mind...
BETTER THAN MYSELF

No more mistakes or misinterpretations,
Just rewards and congratulations.
Hesitation not confused with procrastination,
It takes time to look at what I'm facin.
Slow my role on the dice be patient,
Hasty in my ways wishing I would have waited
For the right time dedicate it to my loved ones
So elated, tell my future self I finally made it,
Look at what God created let me reiterate it...
I'm better than myself.

James D. Richards
BEAUTIFUL FLOWER

Picked for unique beauty offered as a show of affection,
Persuasively seductive flattering recipients.
Gaining favor for the one whom ironically causes her demise,
Well enough to be left in place connected to that which gave life.
If only she was not as she is but will soon not be,
For she was picked for unique beauty,
Offered as a show of affection,
Comforted only by the joy her short thereafter life will bring.

James D. Richards
I look at you like a star ever shining,
Time does not exist in your love.
You are everything, you are forever if only forever were more,
For time does not exist in your love.
No word in the language of your love to express doubt.
No method of measurement in attempt of wonder
For measure has no meaning, only how love speaks to love.
A beautiful mystery only two understand.
A love that will always be if only always were more,
For time does not exist in your love.

James D Richards
SHE LOOKS TO ME

The depth of her moral affection is shallow, near empty. Once full allotted by a tender promise where wondrous amaze awaited exploration. Drained by her abusers replaced with confusion of love, what love is supposed to be. Now in front of me with hopes of replenishment from being drained by a tender promise of love, of what love is supposed to be, She looks to me.

James D. Richards
THOUGHTS OF YOU

You are beautiful,
Though your beauty is not common it is unique and precious.
What more of beauty can be said than that which you reflect.
A gem of priceless value quantified only by it's owner's desire.
Let no man understand the beauty I see in you.

James D Richards
Wrong Impression

She noticed that I noticed her,
I think she got the wrong impression.
I could tell she was interested
But I think she got the wrong impression.
Intrigued with the alternative to her current reality,
Her mind portrayed fantasy of finally living lavishly.
I want to approach her, I know she wants the same thing.
I hope she understands what wasted time brings.
She just wants to get to know me,
I think she got the wrong impression.
I want to get to know her,
But I think she got the wrong impression.
I know that if I go in she may never want to leave,
But imma tell her when to stop, when to go, imma tell her when to breathe.
She's acting hella giddy, ready to be infatuated,
Show me to her people so she can be congratulated.
She noticed that I noticed her
But I think she got the wrong impression.
She's gone end up with her feelings hurt,
Cuz I think she got the wrong impression.

James D. Richards
TRUST ISSUES

I have trust issues, I find it hard to trust.
For I know men that for next to nothing will leave you in the dust.
My trust in you will weaken me I'm sceptical of your intentions.
I don't feel right, I'm parinoid, my name too much is mentioned.
The wall is comfort, I lean against it not having to watch my back,
But even the wall built by man is vulnerable to collapse.
To know me well is complicated, I'll keep you at a distance.
The closer you get the further I'll go, pursuit will meet resistance.
My frame of mind, the way I am, can't be the only way,
But until I change the words "trust me" is the worst thing you could say.

James D. Richards
ONCE

She loved me once.
Once she loved me.
Her eyes were open but could not see,
She loved me once she belonged to me.
I did not love her back or even treat her right.
Once she loved me, she did not love me twice.

James D. Richards
HUMBLE'S LESSON

On top of the game by means of no shame,
But your ass got knocked in the grass.
Soiled by the earth,
No humility in your stability,
But bounce back from your loss,
Just another road to cross.
Get up and be meek,
The ground you're on belongs beneath your feet.

James D. Richards
ANCIENT TEARDROP

Things of the past which my eyes have seen but my soul could not comprehend until now. Recognizing the evil not from a perspective of moral and emotional integrity, rather, from a perspective of confused conflict. Things, such as, when deciphered later in life cause emotional instability and psychological vulnerability where an average man's sanity is easily reversed. Suppression is a false comfort hidden in darkness yet still recognizable to the empathetic. Anger, vengeance, and spite, praying to release. Then, I did not cry holding on to tears clinched in anger. Now, I pray, ancient tear drop.

James D. Richards
SEE FOR YOURSELF

Sometimes I get so frustrated, aggravated,
Because my mistakes though few and far in between are aggregated.
What seems real aint always true,
But you hear it so much that it's real to you.
Make believe and fabrication,
Blinded and binded through manipulation.
Borrow my eyes and see what I see,
Then look in the mirror and see if you see me,
Or is it just me, looking at you,
Saying what sounds real aint always true.
Who do you trust, what do you believe?
You can look through my eyes but you aint me.
You must be everything or nothing at all.
You must stand firm and never fall.
You must be a stone you don't even cry,
You must think you're brave because you aren't afraid to die.
You must like risk, you take so many chances.
You must be something to look at, you get so many glances.
You must be a user, all the people that you use.
You must be stupid you don't win more than you lose.
You must be guilty, look at all the signs.
You must be crazy, looks like you lost your mind...
But I am none of that, I don't think that's me,
Now I need my eyes back for myself I have to see.

James D. Richards
PRECIOUS SOUL

Precious soul of the pure light, shine pure. Held between two hands from top and bottom not seeming to touch. Connected by rays from the north, south, east and west, shine pure. No words, no resist, submissive without thought to whom from which you began to whom from which you begin. Precious soul of the pure light.

James D. Richards
A DAUGHTER'S FATHER

She doesn't understand how much he cares,
She cannot comprehend, ashamed and unaware.
She barely speaks she holds her tongue dazed and confused.
Her head held down her mouth scared shut from fear of another bruise.
He cocks his hand she covers her face,
He tells her to sit she knows her place.
She cooks she cleans and continues to love,
Devoted and loyal she will not budge.
Shattered as she is hard to put together,
You open your arms and try to make it better.
Your eyes from tears are red,
Your neck is stiff but you turn your head.
A cry for help she does not bother,
But what if she was your daughter or he was your father.

James D. Richards
YOU ARE BRAVE

You lift your voice to speak against wrong even when others don't.
You stand and fight, no fear or flight, even when others won't.
You seek no praise your passion leads righteous are your intentions.
Adversaries tense, position in defense, when your name is mentioned.
For those whom doubt do not for long as they count your many victories,
Dare not oppose fearing defeat forever remains in history.
When you're long gone, many things will be said in many different ways,
But when they speak your name I know they'll say,
Forever you were brave.

James D. Richards
I know many killers, some claim righteousness in their deeds, some could care
less. They are of all sorts, from the weak and feeble to the strong and
fearless, from the merciless to the kind, from the coldhearted and calculated
to the unexpected, from the persecuted to those whom have suffered no legal
repercussion. Some I know well, some I love, but all I keep at an appropriately
calculated distance. Looking into the eyes of a killer, I am able to look away
if I choose, they do not share the same luxury as I, for they may never look
away from themselves.

James D. Richards
A SOUND CHOICE

How much more deaf are you than a man born deaf? If you choose not to hear, how much more deaf are you than he? If you choose not to hear the argument of your adversary, if you pay no attention to words that you hear, if you make no attempt to gain understanding, if your actions reflect that of one who cares not of a wrong occurrence if the wrong is not against he, though others suffer. Even a man born deaf is able to make a sound choice, so may you.

James D. Richards
MANIPULATED LOVE

Where does a man learn to love a woman? It is possible that a man learns to love a woman from the way his father loves his mother. Is a mother's unconditional love for her son, or lack there of, the foundation upon which a man's knowledge of love is built? Wherever or however a man learns to love a woman, it is imperative that he also learns the ways in which not to love.

For many years I viewed love as an art form, a special technique or tool used to manipulate. I looked deep into her eyes as if searching for the origin of her soul, hypnotizing, her heart eager with anticipation, her mind confused by overwhelming emotion, her body at a heightened sensitivity to touch... At that perfect moment I said to her, "The only way to express through words the way I feel for you right now is to tell you the truth, and the truth is, I love you." A lie told with such ease as though the definition of the word was nonexistent.

I lied about loving them only to be loved in return. You see, I wanted them to love me because I defined to them what love is, because if you love me in the way that I define to you, there is nothing you will not do for me... Then along came Sarah Shine. As the many before her, I looked into her eyes and told her that I loved her. She looked back at me with disbelief and disgust, she said, "There is no need to lie, I will do as you please." She laughed and said, "You and my ex would have made a great team, he could control with his fists, as he does, and you could tell them you love them after, as you do." I was silenced by shock, but laughing inside. You see, she respected my time and appreciated my knowledge and concern, but most of all, she despised the way I manipulated love.

James D. Richards

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CHERISH VALUE AND WORTH

There are many of whom which I placed value upon, monetary value, what they were worth to me. A tragic misfortune, you see, the value I placed upon the many was not equivalent to their worth. I exploited their value instead of cherishing their worth. I know now that their worth would have brought more than the value I placed upon them, but because I did not cherish their worth, their value depleted, soon after, they were dismissed, no longer needed. Cold way to be, in my heart it truly hurt, I valued them with such regard, but I did not cherish their worth.

James D. Richards
NECESSITY, FAITH, AND WORTH

As directed by faith, a man pushes a large boulder, larger than he, up a mountain. More than tedious the struggle, the weight hard to bare, he continues step by step, push by push. He turns and rests the boulder at his back and contemplates, Necessity, Faith, and Worth.

James D. Richards
LOYALTY

Priceless is loyalty. True loyalty, not false or that which can be bartered or bought, that which is craved by kings and longed for by queens. True loyalty is insulted when defined as friendship, even love cannot compare. It is the willingness of death, to live for and to die for that which you are loyal to, or to whom you have pledged loyalty, not to a point, but absolute. Be loyal to yourself, be loyal to God, beyond that I will not advise, for your loyalty may bring great success if you are wise, or it may very well lead to your demise.

James D. Richards
SUPER KID

I'm eight years old, fearless and bold, there is not much that scares me,
So I grab dad's pack when he's asleep, ok this is kind of scary.
I go to the bathroom I lock the door I'm at the toilet bowl,
I take a cigarette between my finger and thumb and slowly begin to roll.
Rolling back and forth butt facing up this is my favorite game,
The stuff falls out into the water I smile I have no shame.
I roll and roll one by one until they all are empty,
The more he buys and tries to hide the more and more he tempts me.
I'm eight years old but I'm not dumb I want my dad to live,
So I play my game that's what I do, I'm just a little kid.

James D. Richards
I'm a back seat driver, turn here turn there, speed up slow down. I'm looking out for the both of us, keeping in mind the intended destination, but I feel like you're not listening and I hate being ignored. Why are you not going the way I want you to go? The driver speaks, "you better calm down before I pull over and let you out!" You can walk, and I'll drive right along the side of you, watching you stumble, watching you trip and fall. I'll even get out and help you up, and let you continue to walk. I'll watch your feet blister and care for your wounds. I'll watch the weather fall upon you and cover your head, and when your legs give out, I'll carry you. Is that what you want? See, I'll get you where you need to go, but this is my ride, my hands on the wheel, my foot on the gas, and the route is mapped out. So I humbled myself and said, "let's roll."

James D. Richards
For the majority of my life I entertained the pursuit of riches. Dedicated, persistent, and committed to a never ending paper chase. In finding my niche, paper was accumulated as easy as the guarantee that a man's sinful lust will possess him to spend foolishly on a woman. As easy as I obtained my so-called riches, more easily did I let them slip away. Easy come easy go, a fool and his money will not have a long lasting relationship. So disrespectful was I, in gain and in loss. However, in chasing my riches, I would often in moments of sanity accrue priceless wealth. Much more appreciated and respected was the wealth I acquired, mainly from those who had come many years before me. So if you are out there chasin paper, I'll be the first to tell you, "getcho money," and I wish you all the luck in accumulating wealth.

James D. Richards
I have enough because I have God,
Because I have God I have enough.
No more no less than what he provides,
Enough is defined in each sunrise.
Not wrong in prosper, success or achievement,
When He and I are in agreement.
What more can He give than everything?
What more than His Son can sacrifice mean?
Joyful, happy, and thankful,
Though loss to the heart is painful.
For what it is worth we all must learn
That what we have lost is of no concern.
I have enough because I have God,
Because I have God I have enough.

James D. Richards
INDESCRIBABLE

We use the most beautiful words in our language to describe the most beautiful things, but words fall short or simply do not exist to accurately tell the story of your beauty. My hesitance in your description is complementary. I can speak of the color of your eyes, the texture of your hair, your smile, your skin, your shape, but your beauty is indescribable.

James D. Richards
THERE IS BEAUTY

Beauty is much more than what we see. Imagine you do not have the privilege of sight, that you cannot see what others perceive as beautiful. A look described as beauty is that which is appealing to the eye often derived from social influence. However when we discover what beauty can offer you will find that there is beauty in a touch, there is beauty in passion, there is beauty in words, there is beauty in struggle, there is beauty in what you have accomplished, there is beauty in most everything you do with pure intentions. The world is beautiful by much more than what we see.

James D. Richards
LONELY HEARTS DESIRE

To those whom seek but yet have not acquired,
Of what unknown, heard nor shown,
A lonely heart's desire.
Hands can't touch, lips can't feel,
Fabricated substance, though it seems real.
You dream of love heart open and hand,
But what you seek cannot be planned.
No guarantee it will find you twice,
So when you find your heart's desire,
Hold on to it for life.

James D. Richards
MISPLACED DREAMS

He comes to steal your dreams, although so real it seems,
The night goes by you open your eyes but don't remember a thing.
Beautiful thoughts, fantastic adventures,
The world was yours and all its splendor.
Low and crude foul and rude it was not his to take.
The day goes by to your surprise there's been a big mistake,
You find your dream tucked away or simply just misplaced.
Sleep tight my friend and worry not, your dreams he cannot take.

James D. Richards