Freedom Inside A Cage

Jesus A. Andrade
Dedications

Para mi abuelita Tita
mi abuelita Cruz
Gracias
I would like to thank my parents, family, and friends for their support and encouragement. It was through their guidance and love that I was able to pursue my goals. I would also like to thank my instructors, who have been instrumental in my success. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my classmates, who have been a source of inspiration and support. Thank you.
Dr. Wiethaus aka Dr. U. Harris, and her students from Wake Forest University, for all the opportunities and the help you've offered me through the years. To my teachers Ms. Beaver and Ms. Green, from Foot Hill's Corn for all your encouragement. To a very special friend Momma Uymack, for all your prayers and kind words. To my friends Mike Moore and El. And to the homeboy Paco for having my back. I'll never forget that. I'm here for youse. And to the other few I call my friends. Thanks

With Love and Respect

Jesus Andrade Ruiz
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**Freedom Inside a Cage**

Balls twisted
Curled,
Formed a sphere around me
Tears welled
Spewed in the dark

"Awwright now, don' be goin' all crazy on me."
Warned a summony officer no older than 6
Figuring I would bang on walls
Or attempt suicide

**But No!**

I remained still, studying bloody wrists
Closed my eyes as a chill caressed me
"Awwright?" Someone asked
He too was ignored.

My freedom was gone

Floating in a beer can left on a stal
Beneath fluorescent lights

---

I wrote this
Surrounded by sad faces
Faces cemented forever in my mind
One of them a girlfriend
What never been mine

Caged
Trapped
My wrists bled
I rubbed my eyes
As I staggered towards the sink
Where I soaked my disbelief
In water mixed with blood

Woke up
To an officer banging on my door
This can't be real...
But as I tasted grits for the first time
Reality sat in.

Later on the day
Someone shot me a pen
Thought about writing family, maybe a friend

s. jesus a.
But what to say?...
How to express?...

Blanced at my wrists, winced at the pain
Blood caked over veins
Washed away

How could I explain?...

Instead
I wrote my first poem
And found freedom
Freedom

Inside a cage.
My words - desire to be valued. My words - desire to be understood.

These words - desire to be understood. These words - desire to be understood.

That part of us, unless these Thirsts heaven.

The self. They desire for someone to understand the process.

The self.

And speak imagination To drowsy themselves deluge.

Into someone's mind, every cell over muscle.

Will now repeat overflow in streams.

These words - desire to be read.
To be read over and over again
Till ancient
These words
Desire to be read
By you.

O. James A.
Dissolution

A crow
pecked at my dissolution

I bled
portrayed as the unbelieving thief

A carcass in the street
A corpse
No longer breathing
Lungs exposed
Eyes...
....opened...
...a beak over my brow

Black wings obscured my sight
Claws gripped my shoulder

A crow
Seated on dissolution
The dissolution...
...across my face

E. James A.
Searching

I will always love you
she whispered.
The wind swept her words
from the floor
up to the heavens
over celestial wings of dying stars
drawn
expecting the sound of a drum;
her heart beat
lost in space
between birth and death
where life takes place
far-far away.
where eyes don't stray
for blindness comes easy
locking eyes with the sun;
an eclipse.
where, I ask,
are your words?
searching for... love?
as I search for you
in every clear sky.

T. genes A.
Walk With You

For those
whose father dissolved inside a little
Whose mother bathed in black substances
Those who can't see past the smog
I see
your hand stretched out to me
Trying to grasp the comfort of my words
I hope you reach their warmth
For I too
know how cold the streets can get
when someone's there
When blood stains journals
I know
When enough is enough
When you feel alone
When smiles become moans
I know
I've cried in the dark
When times were hard
Broken down
I have
Stretched out my hand

S. Jesus A.
And none was there
Do hold on
As I grasp yours
We'll walk together...

... just read my words
Simple Things

Felt the grass today
Tiny stings
caused me itch
Eyes fixed
between the moon
and a water tower
A star
visible only to those
searching for beauty in simple things
Beside me a green bud;
a dandelion; morphed.
Gone for the night
Trees;
black figures raising over razor wire,
swaying.
Tilted by the breeze
Crowns bowed as I watched
afraid to blink
For I knew not
what I might miss

10. January A.
Fell

Judge me
Hang me on a cross...
... if I cry

I fell in love
Trapped in her curls,
sweet lips,
the forest of her lashes.
Tanned skin,
sand dunes,
brownees.

Sweet water
from palms,

Her sweat:

Tears of passion,
waves that drew me

Swirled me around
from one end of her body,
to the next

Palm to palm
From...

... the line separating curls

H. jesus a.
To the bottom of her heels.
I fell...
Love
What You See

I'm trying to see what you see
Because you love me
And I...
 I can't seem to find one thing
To love about myself

My eyes reflect darkness
Yet
You love their browness
My smile is wicked
Yet
You say it melts you away
My scars are rugged
Yet
You say you accept my troubled past
My tattoos
Are only mistakes in your eyes

And so I look
Stare at my own reflection
Trying to see what you see
Trying to see myself

M. June A
The way you see me

Instead
I find pain
Not the happiness you claim
Only hatred and shame

I stare
At my image inside the mirror
Stained
I try to understand why
After all we put you through
You've decided to stay
Divine You

Old memories arise inside my mind
And I am there...
Beside you... As I will always be

Keep me in your memories As I will keep you in mine
Don't feel alone

The air around you is my spirit
I am with you
In the stitchings of my inner being
I held your scent

I held every bashful smile and sweet caress
My heart misses you As do my mind and soul

But don't feel alone For this will all be over soon

God gives us a piece of His kingdom in every friend
And that is what you are
You are special to me Like every breath
And like every breath You keep me alive

K. Jones
Your words and kind words Are something divine
Divine in every sense of the word
Like you
Still Mine

I remember she liked me
Remember her telling her sister with a giggle
Behind childish fingers and bitten nails
I turned red
Looked away
Slowly but surely she became my baby
And in the back of that car we kissed
Kissed inside that store
Behind a church
She became my first love
Forever will be
For we never...

...broke up.

We just...

...grew apart
She went her way and I went mine
But she...

...never left
Still carry her inside my heart to this day
My first love
I'm just glad
We never...broke up...

To future
I am There

The light inside your eyes Will forever set my soul aglow
Bringing salvation With every smile
Remain strong Show that strength That fearlessness

Smile
At times I wish The wind could carry me to you
At times I wish I could cradle you in my arms And ease your pain

To hold your hand and assure you Things will be ok.

Smile
In the stars I see your face In the moon your smile

Thinking of your beautiful spirit My mood is lifted
My prayers and odes surf the wind On their way to you

19 years A
Smile
Thee breeze caressing your forehead, It's a soft kiss from a friend.
When things get tough, Search inside your heart, Because I am there.
Smile
Inside your Journal

Your name is scribbled inside
My journal

Inside the walls of a pierced heart
Blood dripping
from the exit point.

Now I know
The pain it felt
As the flint injected pain all through its flesh
You left.

Sharp rock glides through the air
I'm scared
I've never been hurt like this before
Arrows
From all directions
Blind my sky

No clouds, no sun, no moon, no light
I await for pain to inject itself in me
Eyes closed, body tense,
You use to help me through times like these
Now I know how it feels to cry...
...Alone

The sharp edge enters my side

21. June A
Eyes remain closed
Will I wake?
Will I survive?
Or
Will I wake inside someone's journal?
Trapped inside the walls
Of a bleeding heart?
Silent Freedom

A million thoughts in my mind
Which transform to poems
About poverty, peace,
Even war.
What good is my voice then?
If it keeps being ignored?
Inside this cage
Alone.
With thoughts of never going home

I've got time to do
And people get gone
Get missing.
They disappear,
Nobody seen nothing
Just left with the wind.
So I wonder
Will the wind take me next?
To that place
Where we will all...

...be free.

2V. James A
Black Kiss

Her metal arm cradled me
From chin to ear
Her body
Lay gently over mine
Black kisses
Engulfed every inch of my body
Pain
Pure pleasure next
A found treasure
A treasure
That would break me
Make me lose it all
Everything,
But I was loved
And that was the only thing
The only thing
That mattered...
That mattered...

... most.
Soulless

The soul erupted
Drained.
Plain clothes stained
With hopes,
Dreams.
Covered in a crimson substance
That substance
Which gives life to mortals

Dried
Dead
Lifeless
As a shattered lantern.
Darkening cold streets.
Streets
Lacking their glow.
As faded tearlets
In winter storms.

The soul
Was no more.
Bars

I listened
As the rust covering the bars spoke.
Yelled
Screamed in pain
Dried blood over steel
Splattered
    From the edges of razor blades
Homemade shanks
War stories.

The bars talk to me
I watch them rust away
Like old coffin remains
Bones decaying, becoming dust
Slowly
The purpose?
Don't know
I just watch
As the bars keep bleeding
Peaceful Death

Towers watch over me
Walls
Engulf me
Cages
Swallow me
As I slip closer and closer
To the unknown

Unknown
Because no one knows
Where we go
When we...

... die
I hope I die in peace
Not by the sharpness of a pick
A sharp piece of metal
A rope made of sheets

I don't want to keep having nightmares
Of being buried outback
Underneath cow dung and drying pasture

26. June A
So I pray and ask the Pastor
Will I ever be free?
His yes an "Amen"
But remains silent when asked
"Will I die in peace?"
Fear

Tears drip down
the bars of a cell
Following the path
many others have
White knuckles exposed
   gripping cold metal
Wanting to sleep
   but won't
Afraid
   I might not wake
Wrapping myself in cold sheets
talking to the ceiling
Blank eyes staring back
   from the darkness
Belonging to a friend,
a brother, a dead cousin?
Always there
   asking for help or offering theirs
But how can I help
   When all I can be is afraid?

Afraid

---Jane A
of the day...

...I won't wake
Old Vato

Was gone for a while
But was brought back
By the chiflidas of the compas
Whose job is
To remain firme
To machar la ranita
That creeps

While chilling on la varda
Same varda ke plakiastes
While morro.
Un mocosó
Stealing everything you could.

Mañoso

Tried to leave
La vida
Like when shots rang i corrias
Now you're back
It's not the same
A lot of homitos are dead
The rest
You left in the pen
You got off easy

30 year A
This time
So the onda
He vas' hacer?
Got a fresh start
The future's in your hands
Glue

Homies live recklessly

No future

They only see

Bottles of Rum

Yerba filled blunts

Who's el mas chingon

But once a vato locked up

It's a morros turn

To step up

Glued up;

El vato no piensa

All he thinks about

La piedra

Todos caen presa,

Al lider no respetan

One hit, two hits,

And p'a fuera.

Next!

Who's gonna step up?

More than likely

Nadie

For they're all glued up
Catering Society

Here are a few

At the end of the day
I thirst for a sip

Which they sip themselves

Shopping for trips

Do you need more

From the third beetle

The accumulation of wealth

They only worry about

If you're near red

Moon car

But what can resist? Not

Of waxy wings

To live

Surround drags ladies do this

Lilac someone singing

Surround stings into mood

Shed one eye prints

I was raised around clowns

---

Something Duck
Why do you think we're placed in cages?

They...

...They keep on laughing.

Clown.
"...prey for me," the homie said
"No homito," I replied.
I refuse to become prey for you.
I won't catch a bullet or stand on the corner
I won't shoot up or drink Coronas
Refuse to throw up signs and start problems.

I won't become prey.
I refuse to hang out late or sneak outta windows
I won't down liquor or toke weed
Neglect my child or my sweetheart

I won't become prey.
I refuse to disrespect my familia, my ancestors
I won't come home high
Refuse to see mi jebita cry

I won't become prey.
I'll be my own man
Simon, your chica's tight.
But all of em won't ride
I won't become prey

"Not prey ese," he looked at me with a serious face. Then dropped his gaze. "I said prey for you."
"In that case, carnaceo. I will pray for you," I told him. Then... he left.
Feelings
Love Is...

Leave him
Step inside my dreams
Become holy water
Bless me

Don't look away
Lock eyes with me and see inside me

Tis never too late
To fly again

Whoever clipped your wings
Didn't clip your spirit

touch the clouds
Believe its real

Smile once more
Dare the doves singing around us

Follow the path of the wind
Feel free

Your ruffled wings are opened once again

Spread into the wind
Flapping against dissolving clouds
Regaining their strength

Believe it

It's real

[Signature]
Close your eyes
Let your senses guide you
Breath

Feel the freshness of the air
Its pureness

Listen to the soaring notes of the angels
Hear the Creator
As he moves above us

Listen
Can you hear his heart beat?

Imagine the doors of heaven opening for you

Fly
Enter into heaven
And let me take care of you
Let me love you

Finally you realize
That this...

...Is...
...Heaven

w. jeanw.
Risks

Painless love

Do make believe

Did I give up on love

Will I ever be loved again?

Let your eyes lead the way for my soul to escape

Let your water wash away

The filthiness inside me

Two hearts can dwell in the same place

If they become one

When the spirit is stronger than the body

That's pure love

Words caress the heart and arouse passion

An insult to the heart

Scars the soul

A wave holding fear

Carries away true love

A mantle of lies hide our true feelings

As we wonder

Is this love real?

Is it worth the risk?

True love brings real pain

The overcoming of this test brings the answer

By: Jason L.
It's worth it

If you cry, then it's true.

Love hurts,
And this is how you come to know
Love is real.
Rare

You are rare like true love
Sweet nectar from a rose
You've become my desire
My new found empire

The conquest of my dream
The cloud my dreams rest on

You are the pupils inside the Virgencitas eyes
The petal from a rose underneath her feet
You are the ray of light that escaped her smile
You are beautiful

You are the rain that nourishes the earth
The star which guided the wise men
You are meant to be worshipped by every man
Every mortal should desire a whisper from your lips
Silent love

Like the flapping from a hummingbird's wings
Sacred like Cupid's harp
Loved like Jesus' heart
You are four leaves on a clover
Wings on a phoenix

Beautiful

Like an Indian sister's dress

44 years
Bare like the fountain of youth
You are beautiful
Simply because you are you
Falling

She doesn't love you
I told my heart
To keep it from breaking

It's ears closed
By dreams of what can be
What should be
What love means...

... it will never know.

Love now comes to those
Who brandish new clothes,
Trips to the mall.

All I offer are words
On shrivelled pieces of paper
So love will never show up
at this prison's door.
This I know

So I yell to my heart
To not fall in love
with the picture on the wall.
With the picture of a girl
I know nothing about.
Not her name, not her age.
I yell and yell...

... and still it falls.
Love

A tear
The house where pain and sorrow reside
Let out to play during cloudy days
Happiness shared under blue skies
Beauty
Resides in the glint of a tear
Sometimes leaving behind
A deep ugly tear
A narrow path
As it free dives down a cheek
Splitting skin in half
As well as the heart
Leaving you shivering
In cold winter nights
Shaking up your strength
Buckling your knees
Life will never be the same
Clouds will gather
Eyes will sour
No one is ever able to eliminate pain from their lives
Completely.
But keeping tears from stinging eyes
Helps.
Your dignity evolves into a dam
Refusing their escape

A dam emerges
Out of that shy little girl
Wiping away her tears with suit
No one has seen before
Like a phoenix fresh out the ashes
Her pride arises
Her chest: A morgue where worries rest
The morbid years of her past gone
Buried
A radiant smile has dried away old tears
Like fallen leaves under the sun
And now her life

Holds true meaning.
Painful Blooming

You are beautiful
Yet painful

I hear
Slithering down a petal
The petal of the flower
I helped grow

Become woman
Your smile has evolved
No longer girlish
Your lips no longer shy away
They accept mine
With hunger
With passion

Have you noticed the changes in the mirror lately?
Noticed how rosy your cheeks have become?

Lips smothered in lipstick
Your once shy eyes
Are now hidden behind dark shadows
Mascara you've applied

The eye-lashes you swept my image with
Are gone.
A plastic pair overlaps them
Blocking the radiance from your stare
Like invasive trees
Blocking the sun
Where have you gone to sweetheart?
What have I done?
A tear slithers out of me
As the flower blooms before me.
Let Me

I want to know you
For the image in my mind
To become real
Your smile
A shine across my face
Gray paint over bricks
Over decaying buildings
Sunrays
   Sparkling water
Orange leaves in Autumn
Waving at speeding cars
Glittering icicles
On the edge of a rooftop
I want your face to appear before me
I want to meet you
I'm an explorer

Yearning for foreign lands
Abundant with exotic fauna
Species unknown to man
What's hiding in your heart?
Behind your smile?
In the depths of your soul?
What is it? ...
...
Let me know you

I'm dying to know.
Ten

I want you to understand
That I've been gone ten
Haven't felt a woman's warmth since
A kiss?...

Yes.
Back in...

...09?
An embrace that lasted only seconds

So sorry if I seem...

...awkward.
If I can't hold a conversation
If I seem...

...uninterested

Cold.
Shy.
Distant.
Look past you.
Sorry if I squeeze you too tight.
Bite your lip, or step on your feet.
Just stare at the roof.
Sorry.
Sorry if I don't ask about you
Your family or past memories
Sorry if little things bother me
If all I talk about is...

...prison
If my stuttering gets worst every minute
Sorry for not getting the chair for you
For being unable to hold your hand

Sorry
I apologize.

My sad.

Forgive me.

But baby, please, try to understand
That I've been gone ten.
Hornitos
Tremendo

The ball
Won't roll anymore
It's patched up,

Like my knee
Mi jibita kissed it
Placed a bandaid on it
Called me, "Tremendo."
But I climbed the biggest tree in the Varro
Hung a swing on it
Marissa loves it

She's swinging on it now

It got old...
Yesterday I chased a grasshopper
For a whole hour!
Caught it!
Plucked its wings

Mi sika's getting fixed
Nothing to do
Could ask Teddy to let me cruise in his vanilla
But he's drunk
Oh snap!
Another grasshopper
This one's bigger!
I'll get'm. Watch!
Tommy

Dirty knees
Dirt covered cheeks
Canicas on the floor
Inside an uneven circle
I wipe mucus off my face
With a sleeve
Big toe peeps at me
From a tear in my shoe
Shoe laces on either side
Like dried banana peelings.
Bite my tongue
Stare at the sky
It’s still early...
One
Two
Three
I collect my canicas
Ten
Eleven
Twelve
Squat down to examine each one
Beauty

St. James A.
Tommy says something
I ignore him.
Stuff the moral in my pocket
And I'm gone.
I leave Tommy behind.

Tommy
My imaginary friend.
Veggies

I never liked vegetables
Just sweets; Candy.
The mercaderas would yell
Scream:
Tomates!
Cebolla!
Zanahorias!

Dinacala!
Face twisted
Drimming at the thought of a carrot
Don pa' Conejos
And I'm no animal
Tho' I've rocked orejas de burro plenty times
Still, I refuse.
When ejos de ajos tickle my nose
My insides turn

Twist and make noise
I've had nightmares of lechugas attacking me
Awoke, prayed to la Virgencita
Sunday's coming
The carne I can stand
But lechuga still gives me nightmares

6/18/2000 A
I Was

One story too high
True story
No lie

Found myself above all else
Cruisin' through the skies
Engulfed in darkness
Before ascending to the moon
Transforming to a white unicorn
Playing the flute
Follow me!

Let me tell you stories
About my days as an angel
Days with no worries
A Prophet cleansing the sick
Curing hunger, starvation
Now I'm just me
No one to you

Human once more
Thanks to you
Let me tell you secrets
About the places we lived
About places
Filled with treasures and wonders
If I told you, home,
You wouldn't believe
My Future

Dirt caked over cheeks
Worn out chancas
Two pair of jeans
A dream
With no dollar
Only sweat

Dirt

Outlining the lines of my hands

Sweat strips
Milking out of me
As I stroll towards a future
A future

That isn't there.
Homito

For the homito
Taggin' paredes i enaguas
Those who feel
Sleepin's past que muera

For those who spend
Their time afuera
You with a sack of canicas
And a firme resorte
You still morro, ese.

For those who only see
Life in la fresta

For those who seek for love
En algunas weya

For those who just got a rasha
And can't wait to cruise
You who jumps in the pool
Sin saber nadar
You still morro, ese.

For the homitas who skip school
Pa' tirar rollo.

65.000 A.
Those who use any excuse
To trick you
Those who smoke and sniff glue
Se te vein las ojas
You who trips
Against other locos
You still morro, ese.

For the homitas
That defend their paño against todo
Those who can't lick it
Por que'stan smui morros
Those whose jefita
Searches for it'll late
You who wants to know
Everything about a Chevrolet
You still morro, ese.

For the homitas who slick their hair back
With a de aquellas stance
Those who just stand
Too cool to dance

Ch. jenn a.
Those who drink the peñitas pito
Con las camandás
You who got mad
Por que ahí escuela mañana
I hope you make it esse.
I'm gonna have

Fees in trendy

She to the golden road

I hear a story

She saw him

He told me

She's my home

Cook like that

I'm going to listen to you.

Penny Black
Thoughts
Home

I ran away from everything
Everyone.
Slept in abandoned cars
Became a stranger
Given to friends

Friends
Who curbed away their helping hands
For I had nothing...
... nothing to give

All I offered
Was troubles, headaches.
So I walked and walked
From place to place
Last
Without faith.
No place to rest
And till this day I walk alone
Searching
Looking
Hoping
For a better home

By Janie A.
Remembered

I became a stranger to people
Who claimed to once have loved me
How can you once
Loved someone?

It doesn't make sense
Love is suppose to last forever
I heard it's possible
To love more than one person
So how am I not included?
I have no problem
Being 3rd or 4th
As long as I'm remembered
Remembered
And loved
By a true friend
Sold

I've sought supernatural beings
In my sleep
They claw at my cheekbones
          Trying to enter my eyes

Trying to blind me
A whisper
          A promise of riches tempt me
To sell my soul
If I fall
          I won't live long
So I struggle
Struggle
          Against evil forces
At times
          They consume me
They own me
They smile
          I smile
We're on equal terms
Except
          They ask me for my soul
I decline

72 years A.
But feel pleasure
Feel loved
Feel rich
Became weak
They promise to never...

...Leave
I want this
I want love
They caress my heart
And fulfill me

It's sold
Fresh Air

God gives us one life
And I've murdered mine
For what's living
Without fresh air?

State air
Dreams through the vents
I suffocate at times
And gulp for a stream of freshness
Instead I ingest
Dust bunnies, foul odors.

Living inside a corpse!
Would you want to continue?
Feeding your lungs dust
Waiting for the day they just...

... give up.

When they fill...

... no more.

For now I breathe.
Tomorrow...

... tomorrow isn't promised.
The Key

To fight the powers that be

I recall that moment

She said, "I will not weep"

She closes my eyelids

But her fingers touch me

The cousin of death

I hear a sound

I fall

Be not severely

Tell camp, I cannot sit

It belongs to me

I close my eyes

... I will sit

Deep around
Its' calmness

Its' peacefulness

But...

...Peace makes you weak
An ancient belief
I listen
Nothing happens
Only the humming of the air vent
Is alive
He's my witness
If I die

Call on him to testify
He will tell you I was terrified
For I had a dream...

...I would die in my sleep

Though sleep isn't mine
For it controls me
I feel the heavy...

...the heaviness...

...of my...

...my eyelids...

76. Jesus A
If I... die...

... blame sleep...

And call...

... my only... witness...

... the... A... U...
Old Saying

I remember that old saying
The one I never listened to
It sounded old
Out-dated
You'll think about this one day
My grandpa use to say
Now I realize that...
He was right
I'll remember that saying
Every
Single
Day
Of my life.

M. Jeans A.
Find Out

I don't make excuses
For the way I live
Or
For the way I am
Other people do.
They see me
And see something
That scares them.

I look in the mirror
And smile
When they see that
Whispers leave their lips
This is this...
This is that...
In the back of my mind
I laugh
Because I know who I am
No excuses

I am me

You are... you

Look at yourself
In the mirror

m. george
And smile
Find out what makes you...
... You
What makes you...
... Unique
Find your own dreams
Your own aspirations
And please
Stop worrying about me
Think

Think about past failures
Tell me what you've learned?

What have you witnessed
Unfold?

Chaos, destruction or pure
Sadness?

Self-pity, simple
Disgust?

Hatred or
Mistrust?

The want to turn away from friends,
Family

Turn away from
Love?

What is it?
Talk to me
I am your best friend
I...

...Am...

...You

Ez. year A
Perdon Abue

I came prematurely to this world
With only seconds to live
Until my grandmother intervened
My angel
    My life line
Praying on bloody knees
For my life to be spared
My mouth gaped
    Dashed
Taking in stale hospital air
My lungs expanded
    Then I exhaled
I regained life
Thanks to my angel
A frail woman
    Crying, praying
For her grandchild to be saved
A grandson
Who would forget about her...
...in time
A grandson
Who would leave her...

73 years old
...behind.
Because the streets took him
Blinding his eyes from true love
Her smile, her blush, her voice.
Filled with concern.
I forgot about her...
Forgot about my grandmother
The woman...

...who gave me life.