Hues Of Incarceration
A Poet's View

By: alfred brooks

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to anybody whose ever been directly or indirectly impacted by a prison system. And to those who enjoy poetry.

Alfred Brooks
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Dark Days

Darker Nights
Islands do exist

I am a soul

with a soul's need.

I am a heart

surrounded by water.

Yet, they say

"No man is an island"
Bored

Restless soul
nowhere to go
nothing to do... Bored

Hands that once produced works that
attracted envy... now grow weak from inactivity
while talent bleed from punctured fingers.

A heart that danced and sung and
laughed and played has
lost its voice, while grace struggle to
regain balance.

even dreams are too fuzzy to be recalled
and, Imagination prefers to remain seated.
Bored.

Alfred Brooks
Suspicion approached me today, wearing a disguise.
Although Suspicion's true contour was unrecognizable,
I did identify the eyes.
Eyes beholding preconceived opinions
that confirm the foundation of it's own beliefs.

I offered Suspicion a seat
and it sat near me as a friend would.
Our conversation was cordial, yet tactful.
I never said what suspicion hoped I would say.
But I'm sure it heard what it wanted to hear,
Suspicion always does.

Suspicion looked at the time
and became visibly uncomfortable...
stood up, and said with a dubious smile,
"We should talk more often."

And I too, lied... saying
"I'm sure, we shall."
No Enemies, No Critics

The man without critics or enemies, is a man who never swims against the tides. The man without critics have never dared to cross scorching sands of traditions on foot relying on the guidance of intuition. He has never ventured beyond the boundaries of the norm. Befriended no cause for which he'd die for. Sees no humanity to stand up for or fight on behalf of.

The man without critics or enemies may be a good man; a kind man, knowledgeable man. But his name and deed won't be logged in history books. And his story will seldom be spoken of by masses.

But the man with enemies and critics shall be remembered long after others are forgotten. He is immortalized by his persecutors.
"I owe you an apology," he said to me, and then explained why.

"I sat at the table of strangers who served me the flesh of your flesh... and I ate. I got the weirdest feeling," he said, further explaining how he felt when they all bowed their heads, giving grace, for the flesh that was about to fill their face.

"At first I was reluctant to eat the character of a friend. But the meat was sweet, like that of a fresh kill. Amid the feast and the laughter, I became ill. And since I was the only one cramped with pain... I realized I had been poisoned. I was convinced that your carcass was the result of a fatal stab in the back. And that I had no right to take part in the canibalization of a friend... For that, I apologize." He concluded, waiting my response.

I responded with a nod and a hug. Because I too have been the guest at such settings where a friend of mine was being carved and served.

Thus, I've learned to be cautious about eating from the table of the ignorant and the jealous, and I vowed to never again sit at the table where a friend is being carved and served.
Jail Bound

He's a young fool,
sware he's cool
yet, dumb as a box of rocks
and he carries a silhouet
neighborhood nuisance with pockets full of cash.
talking loud, pants hang'n off his ass
tat'ted up bully, looking for a fight.
but when 5-0 come around, the fool take flight.

Yeah, run thug, run!
toss. Yo drugs and gun.

He's the reason his church going momma has a hard time
sleep'n. She imagines her son out late at night, creep'n.
And he knows about momma's re-occurring nightmare.
Yet, the more pain he causes, the less he care.
He drove down my street with music so loud
my doors and windows begun to shake.
my food bounced off my plate.
I ran to the front porch wearing bathrobe and a frown.
and shouted, "Turn that got-darn music down!"
He read my lips cause he couldn't hear my words.
so he gritted on me and flipped me the bird.
Who knows where he was headed?
but I had a good idea where he'd eventually end-up.

Alfred Brooks
©
Arrogance

It came
Riding upon a gust of wind
It was a story. Complete from beginning to end.
Entertaining me with it's fragrances,
beauty and wholeness.

My spirit was lifted, during those moments, and
I belonged among the gifted.
All I needed todo was write it down.
Pick up a pen and write it down.

That idea, that story, swiftly vanished from view
just as thoughts often do
after we fail to write our ideas down

Now I sit poised with paper and pen
hoping for another gust of wind.

Alfred Brooks
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Your Habit

When you and I met, you was so young.
You were a kid, discovering life and having fun.
I was well known in your community.
And you was warned to stay away from the likes of me.
But everywhere you looked, you saw hypocrisy.
Therefore, you was bound to explore your curiosity.
And that's how you were introduced to me.
Who Am I? I am your Drug Habit.

You remember clearly the first time you got 'high'.
You thought you had grew some wings, and could fly.
I hid from others, your pain and depression.
And helped you overcome your fear of rejection.
I covered up your doubts and fears.
And made you popular among peers.
Because I was able to do all this,
you decided our relationship was worth the risk.

You thought you could keep me on the low-low.
But I told you that was a "no, no."
Having a drug habit is hard to admit.
You didn't think I was serious, until you tried to quit.
It was many years ago when you started.
And there's been times when we have parted...
You claimed, "I'm through get'n high," "through with dope."
Oh, how many times you said that...

Alfred Brooks
But when I whispered in your ear
you came crawling right back.
I am even stronger than before.
As your Habit, I've become much more.
Now, I'm your master, and you're my slave.
I shall haunt you all the way to your grave.
I'm your God, I'm your Saviour.
This is confirmed by your behavior.

You shake your head, saying that's not true.
Yet, think of all the things I've made you do.
Chasing me is how you lost precious things you had
I'm the reason your child calls another man dad.
You were a drug dealer, a baller, with street fame.
Actually, you were another pawn, in the dope game.

You became fed-up with defeat after defeat
And sought away off the streets
Subconsciously, you wanted to go to jail
At least for a short spell.
Jail was the least of the evils from which to choose.
How else can you explain all your crash dummy moves?
I am the one who sees through your mask.
And I say, "Penitentiary, is what saved your ass."

Drugs are the reason you've caught in prison's revolving door.

Alfred Brooks
And when you are freed; you'll return for more.
Oh, I'll agree that prison is not your favorite place
But you're fed three meals, and you are kept safe.

Rather you are in society or the penitentiary, it's easy to
Find the likes of me.
You Drug Habit.
Let me tell you a story about a man called, "Pops." Every since he was a kid, he's been known by local cops. One day, Pops and some friends was hustling for their food. Pops got caught and he snitched on his crew.

When the crew learned what Pops had done, his kin folks warned, "Pops you better run."

They said, "Oklahoma is the place you ought to go. You're a sorry SOB, but nobody in Oklahoma knows Pop's packed his belongings into a trash bag, purchased a bus ticket with the last money he had. Three days later he was in the OKie State, inside a homeless shelter eating a hot plate.

Now it don't take long, for a thief to return to doing wrong. But those OKies wasn't as 'lame' as he thought; .... he kept doing what he was doing and soon got caught.

Judge said, "Boy, you ain't gonna ever do right. And because of your record, I'm gonna give you "life."

Now oldman Pop is a crazy nut. He's locked up, in a place called Wackenhut.

You might think this story is a lie, but he's working right now working at OCI. (OKla. Corn Industry)
I said when you left me that, 
"my heart will never mend."
But that was then.
When you left, I told friends, "I would die,"
That proved to be a lie.

Discovered a receipt for depression.

2 teaspoons of, "I don't give a damn."
1 Quarter cup of, "It ain't my fault."
8 oz. cup of, "Someone better will come along."
A pinch of, "kiss my ass."
with a pinch of, "your momma too."

Mix everything in my head
Meditate on it under high heat for 30 minutes
Afterwards, chill out for a couple hours
Then, serve when ready
Death of an enemy

My enemy approached me today
pointed digger clenched in fist
ready to die.
lips drooling, growling with accusations
sermoning hell's fiery
ready to die.

My enemy was destroyed today.
Not by pointed digger clenched in fist.
But with open hands
and an open mind, I was able to over come
the belief of a power besides God.

He did not see or feel the thrust and slicing
of a fearless, silent prayer
but might had heard me whisper
"I forgive you"

Right after that
we both turned and walked away
stepping over two corpses
one corpse was the man I use to be
the other was the man he use to be

Perhaps now, we can return to being
Brothers

Alfred Brooks
C

-13-
Visitor

Today, I saw a pretty face
lip-stick boarding a humane smile
eyes avoiding other eyes
cheeks like apples in the market place
a blimish, a small scare
a pretty face
Grief Stricken

I struggled
resisted
but couldn't break free from
the arms of grief.
Grief's big hands picked me up as if
I was a child, kicking and screaming
to be put down.

Grief carried me from one space in time
to another space in time
And when grief did put me down
I was on unfamiliar ground
in strange surroundings

Though I resented being taken there against my will
for some odd reason I felt
I was where I should be. I now know that
Grief never leaves you where it finds you
And often takes up places we never
would have gone on our own

Alfred Brook
"Fuck you too!", I curse
as I stare into the crude raggedy eyes of my prison cell,
and listen to its irritating silence, make
mockery of my misfortune.

Today my love was hindered from sharing with me
her radiant smile,
her sparkling laughter,
her reassuring conversation
and, her bizarre touch.

So... fuck the t.v.! fuck the radio! fuck the mail man!
fuck the warden! fuck the guards! fuck the chaplin!
fuck the 'whole' god-damn joint and every creeping thang
that creeps within it!

but still, while I am sentenced to do this "bit"
I simply want to receive my baby's visit.

This is not an appeal motivated by GREED
but just, a lonely con's NEED
Death Cry

Today I regrettable heard the anguish screams of a man's blood soaking into bleak prison soil.
Rumor says, "He was bitten by a hidden serpent that laid coiled."

Reasons?
   Maybe debt? Perhaps, jealousy, or agitated anger?

He and I were aliens and total strangers,
yet I feel much grief and personal anger.

Sickening, ghastly cries proclaiming death's arrival are often heard.
They're so common they seldom startle.
Cries that rush from dark corners;
rages from cell and shower stalls;
leaving grim blood-stained beds,
floors, and walls.

As today's groaning blood is casually washed away
death will mysteriously return another day,
and haunt this cruel environment
with its Death Cry.

Alfred Brooks
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Yarning for A Friend

The sluggish heavy-footed weekend
finally return,
bringing with it
restless fleeting
visiting hours.

I peer thru
dull, gray, tall steel disgusting layers of fences
topped with curls
of snarling blood thirsty razor-wire
and I observe fortunate cons on visiting grounds
feasting upon the pleasures of humanity.
relatives
children
sweethearts holding hands
embracing
making plans
sharing news and gossip of events

a fragrance of perfume
gracefully ascends the barriers
and dance before my imagination
teasing
mocking my dusty tarnished
memories of love
Emptiness fills my bosom
vision blurred by loneliness
envy lumps my throat,
and my soul flees into a dim isolated corner
hoping
wishing to be as lucky

Knowing I cannot ask for much
but is it too great a wish
to plead for a soft touch?
friendly kiss?
A seldom visit?

Alfred Brooks
"What was it like to be where you were?", a voice asked me, from among the audience. "Explain, how you survived?" said a pair of inquisitive eyes.

I paused, smiled and excused myself, not knowing how to explain to those eyes and that voice, ... what it was like to be where I was. I regretted not having the words to say that, "If you have never looked out the same window as I have, you can never conceive such a view. Nor can I give an adequate description. Therefore, I dare not speak about it."
Why must you attempt to punch holes in my hopes,
Is it because your own dreams won't float?

Why throw stones of pessimism at my house?
even though my house is made of glass?

Please don't offer me your opinion unless I ask
And I doubt that I shall
because I'm turned off by the awful smell
of spoiled advice, spewing with the stench of fear.

Nor do I wish to once again
observe you shackles of failure
which you falsely claim, to
have been "forced upon you."

I don't want to know what you know
if what you know
won't help me grow.
Discovery
and
Growth
“Momma, why is my daddy in jail?”
ask the child, tugging on momma’s dress.
Children have a way of catching us off
our p’s and q’s. With straight-up, no holds
barred questionnaires
that can make you breakout in a cold sweat
or brake down in tears.
Momma didn’t know how to explain, without bringing daddy
shame, so momma answered, “Your daddy did a bad thing.”
The child goes away sad, wondering, “Is my
daddy bad?”

“Pick me up daddy, please... “Want to hear me say my ABC’s?
What did you do so wrong, that you’ve been here so long?
I love you daddy... ” When you coming home?
Children do have a way of catching us off guard,
with straight-up, no holds barred questionnaires
that can cause us to breakout into a cold
sweat or brake down in tears.

A hundred voices echo in the prison visiting room
but daddy hears only the silence of gloom
thus, he offers the sole reply he possess, “Daddy
will be home soon.”
The child goes away sad
and has more questions about dad.
I visited a women's prison on a mission of curiosity amazed by limitless beauty welcoming me.

I visited a women's penitentiary and saw more splendor than a thousand sunsets combined.

Visited a women's prison on an artistic mission, and left there with my mind impregnated with seeds that developed and blossomed into good friends.

I departed that fortress of gloom hoping all the ladies there, will go home soon.
Who Knows

Who knows what greatness is among us?
What treasures sit in our mist,
though not clenched in our fist?
Which of these unknowns shall
uncover the next big find?

Who is able to measure artistic depths
buried in abstract values, to one day
be dug-up from a muted soul?

Who knows what greatness is among us,
deep in the heart of the dreamer
who dares?

I know not what greatness is among us.
But as I look into your eyes, I do trust
that there is greatness among us.

And oh God I humbly ask...
that I might live to witness your
greatness come to pass.

Alfred Brooks
©
Undeserving

He wanted a good woman — until he got one. And he learned that a good woman won't accept his bullshit. And if he puts his hands on her, she won't hesitate to pack his things or her things and split.

He wanted an intelligent woman, with quick wit — until he hooked up with one. That intellectual woman was no stranger to street game. And she wouldn't approve of a dead beat lame, no matter how well he, "tap that thing."

He wanted a woman who frequents the church, yet, is still down to earth — until stumbled-up on one. And he saw that her spirituality is the foundation of her reality. And that she views his hustler, gangster ambitions as fallacies.

Ask him to day, what type of woman he prefer to attract. And he will proudly answer, "A Hood-Rat," just like him.
This is the story about a young man who might live, among—yah. People call him, "Youngster," or "Big Youngster."

Born and raised in the backwoods his family was poor, and doin', no good.
Then his dad found a good paying job and moved the family into the Hood.

Neighborhood gang wanted Youngster to choose up. So they fought him. And he proved to be extremely tough. After a couple scrimishes, the hostility diminished.

Youngster pleased pleasant personality encouraged the thugs to let him be.

He was a big young man, soft spoken, and stood way tall.

One day a friend talked Youngster into playing ball. He always had a desire to give it a try but he had been too shy.

Youngster was clumsy at first, but quickly caught on. Soon he displayed the type of skills that inspire songs.
Youngster didn't care much for school... but he loved ball'n...

...and as good as he played, you knew, that was his call'n. Pro Scouts said his talents are "God given."

And in the future, he'll make a good living.

Unfortunately, one night a game Big Youngster was introduced to Crack Cocaine convinced that it's okay to try one hit and that he has the will power to quit.

Crack, snatched the rug.
Crack pulled the plug
Yes, it was a damn shame
the way Youngster's skills started to drain.
All because of Crack Cocaine.

This story goes like many stories go,
Youngster never made it near the pros.
Matter of fact, he's still trying to earn a GED
And everytime he watches the game on t.v.,
he says to himself, "That could've been me."

Alfred Brooks
Stoned

Walking streets of imagination
i listen to slick-talking fantasies
argue with reality.

A great bird scoops me up and away.
Upon the tip of a mountain the
bird and I sit for awhile,
smok'n home-grown dreams
and trip'n off clouds

We laugh and smoke
and toke and joke
and thump doobies at
small figures below.

The mountain shake
i begin a quick decent
hitting the ground unhurt
but extremely bent.
Wackenhut Blues

Every day, I wake up wondering, "What the fuck?..."
"How did I end up in this place called, "Wackenhut."
Where the rules seem to change almost everyday. And
I can't go outside for a couple hours each day, to
relax or play.

It ain't right, how they deny a man sunlight.
Guards tell us to "walk in the blue."

I don't mind doing what they say. But the
only colors on the floor, is "white" and "gray." And
when you point that out, you loose. Because you
dealing with, "Wackenhut Blues."

I go to work, and there's inmates standing over me
with a whip. Talking about how, I shouldn't be giving
him so much lip.

That's the damned tis thing I ever heard. And
it makes me want to give him the bird.

"Well, Brooks...you can always quit," says one man.
And I would, if it wasn't for "Ecstran." So, I struggle
with the choices I choose, which includes these,
"Wackenhut Blues."

A friend of mine broke his hand. The nurse
said, "I can't do nothing for that man."

He went to medical twice. Each time, they sent him
back to the cell house with a "bag of ice."

For ten days, he saw no doctor, and had no X-rays.

Alfred Brooks
That's how I know that all that information they tell us during orientation, is just a fallacy, formality.

The Correctional Officer took my chess set, so he can go play. Then he tells me that he, "threw it away. CO. at the pod talked to me like I'm an animal. My t.v picks up only two channels.

Post Office contrabands my magazines — even though I believe the pictures are clean. But I'm suppose to accept their word and shut-up. Because that's the way the system is set-up.

The Messhall conditions are a "sin." The tables and floors so nasty, it's a pigs pin.

The canteen prices are out of this world. And if all that don't make your head swearl. God forbid a family member become deceased. Cause, you won't hear about it for at least a week.

My sanity, I'm trying hard not to loose. But I'm dealing with Wackenhut Blues.

Sometimes, I swear my mind is already gone.

I'm staring at the t.v... and it's not on.

Man, next door wants to borrow something I got... a soup or a pouch of Top. So I brake him off a little scratch, while knowing I shouldn't feed a stray cat. Cause they just keep coming back. They keep coming back.

Alfred Brooks
When I look at all these inmates... this ocean of humanity. And try to imagine the depth of this collective masculinity. An enormous amount of positive potential, trapped in a maze of limited beliefs.

If it wasn't for the limitations we accept and believe, just imagine what good could be achieved. But there's too much fear, and too many doubts, and ignorance is plentiful.

Example: A man, age 30, and can't comprehend what he read. But his gang chose him to lead.

I shake my head and grin, knowing that ignorance is our biggest sin.

If he had just one friend with the foresight to see, they would encourage him... "man, go get your GED."

"Use this prison time, to develop your mind. Energize your soul. Set some positive goals."

But, nawl. All they prefer to do is, "slam dominos... from dust, til dawn. And when I complain about the noise, they tell me, "Nigga, make bond."

What I might do is make the Evening News, if I don't get some relief from these Wackenhut Blues.

I asked my Soul, "Soul, is there really a God?"

My Soul stared and nod (Yes).

"Then, where? Where is the God over me?"

And my Soul pointed directly at me.

Now I feel like such a fool,
Knowing that I created these,
Wackenbut Blues.

Alfred Brooks
New Fish
by: Alfred Brooks

When he entered the cell carrying his mattress and bed-roll, I had no resignation, that this was the elderly man's first incarceration. Tilman, a retired contractor, wasn't a hardened criminal. His crime and sentence was minimal. Mutual hospitality kept us both at ease.

And as time would quickly tell, we became friends and got along well.

Predators and parasites kept Tilman in their sites. So they planted in his mind, that, 'in prison, you should live with your own kind.' Tilman sought the favor of Jackals and Snakes believing that was best for his own sake. So, when Tilman decided to move out, I knew what it was really about. I told him, "I understand how you feel," but I warned, "it's a bad idea." They told him something like this, "Move away from that nigga. The races shouldn't mix."

There was nothing more that I was willing to do or say. We shook hands and Tilman went his way. Within a few weeks, said to me, "I regret making that move,"
the guy I move in with, is giving me the blues."
"You and me got along good.
I'd undo this if I could.
I shook my head and sighed
because my hands was tied,
I couldn't help, even if I tried.
Thoughts that I digested that day, begun to sour
as I witnessed another good man being devoured,
by predators I defy
and who couldn't look me in the eye.
When she appeared on the t.v. screen, thought the penitentiary echoed many screams. Charged with attempted murder for trying to spread AIDS. Cold thing is, she showed no remorse for her ways. Her motive was revenge, and that's a fact. Her purpose was to infect nothing but blacks. And the reason for her being so bitter? She claims, "she caught AIDS from," a nigger.

Bam! Damn! My homie been slammed
By a woman name, Nadingham.
It's another low blow
Compliments of GEO.

I remember when she first got hired
The curves of her body is what I admired.
But I also noticed that even when she smiled she looked tired.

Her strong perfume was a joy to smell
But it gave no clue, she was a woman from hell
Who don't think she has long to live
Because doctors told her she's, "HIV Positive."

She took an oath to serve and protect

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©
But with felonious intent she tried to infect
She knew her stuff was good
and she gave it to as many as she could
My homie told me, "man the coochie is bomb. And
so is the head."

I became envious over the things he said
She was giving it up out of both drawn legs.
But she wouldn't give me any, even when I begged.
I thought I was cursed, but I was being blessed.
Because today, my homie is sweating a blood test.

Damn! My homie been slammed
By ah woman name Nadingham.
It's another low blow. Compliments of GEO.

But that's not all of the story, cause everybody knows
She not only screwed inmates, she screwed CO's.
We know who you are, because you walked among us
inmates with your chest inflated
 bragging on how you screwed and ate it.
Now you have a sick feeling in your gut.
And you wish you would've kept your mouth shut

Your worries seem to be without end
as you think about the women you've sexed since then

Alfred Brooks

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your wife and/or girl friend.
I bet, if you could make one last wish
You'd wish you could strangle that bitch.
Because, Bam! Damn! You've been slammed
By a woman name Nadingham.

Now if you are one of the unlucky ones
I pray you don't do what she has done.
That is, allow your heart to turn bitter,
and with felonious intent
spread a silent killer.
Sly Girl, you was wild, even as a child. Momma told you: "Little girls don't do this... they don't do that."

But all she was doing was packin'-her-jews. Because talking to you was like talking to the walls.

It was sorta strange,
how you didn't like playing little girl games.
Others played house and putzie cake
while you Sly Girl, was stayin' out late.

Hip hopin', none stoppin', teenage adolescent
the real hard way, is how you learn your lessons.

Momma didn't know what she was talkin' about.
You thought you knew all the ends and outs.

The games you play are nothing new,
people played them long before you.

You wouldn't take advice, didn't want any help
You had to learn for your self.

Never did like to study,
went to school just to be with your buddy.

Silk smooth skin and coco tan
get whatcha wanted when you played your hand.

You could've been anything you wanted to be,
you had the looks and the opportunities.
But you was too busy being slick and sly
so the opportunities just passed you bye.

How about the time that you fell in love with a certain guy?
He made you feel a burning inside, put a sparkle in your eye.
But he plays with your heart like it's a toy.
Nothing you do pleases that boy.
Still you try everything you can.
Finally, you decide you don't need a boy
what you need is a man.

Sly Girl, you feel sick and weird
You realize that you missed your period.
Confused and ashamed. You don’t know the father's name.
Even if you did, he wouldn't admit it.
He'll, curse you out, and claim another man did it.
People pointing fingers behind your back.
Call'n you this - calling you that.
That life in your womb, you want to smite
but som'um in your heart says:
“that wouldn't be right.”
You let it live. Give birth to a kid.
The baby looks so good.
You know you did what you should.
Sly Girl emerges into motherhood.

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Motherhood is more than you can stand
You mother takes the child off your hands,
Relaxed relieved, you feel at ease.
You never did like that responsibility.
Tell yourself, that will happen no mo
back to the doctor you go
There you decide, to have your tubes tied.

Now things can return to the way they was
You still got the streets in your blood
To survive the streets, you got to learn the ropes
the games, the lames, the tricks and the traps.
You got to learn where the money is at.

You met a guy whose really neat
tall handsome, with a nice physique
He’s a hustler of the streets
He wears fancy clothes and diamond rings;
a fast talker, saying the right things.
He swears, you’re the finest thang, he’s ever seen.
You should be centerfold of a magazine
Together, you’ll make, “a hell-of-a team.”

Sly girl doin prison time
Your man don’t write you, and never send a dime
As the old saying goes, “out of sight out of mind.”

Alfred Brooks
Now you see what's been done
He's the one you depended upon
You cry and curse, hate his guts
You declare that you'll never again trust.
You know what it is to be lonely
You can depend on you only.

Years later, you've been released. Back on the streets
living on the edge. Close calls, close shaves
one wrong move, you back in jail or in the grave.
Many times, death stood and waited
but you Sly Girl was underestimated.
You escaped the hands of fate
because you didn't swallow the hook
although you took the bait.

It took the best of your years, to get the respect of peers
but you've earned your title.
Some sly girls look up to you as their idle,
Call you lucky, or it's your brilliant mind.
But you and I know that you're running out of time.
The life you living is get'n harder.
You've lived and learned, grown wiser and smarter.

Get'n up in age. Your hair turning gray
You look older than you are, got battle scars.

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Broke free from that life you chose.
No more gangsters, liars, thieves and ho's.
When you think of your past, you wonder, "how you did it?"
Hard to believe that you really quit it.
Straightened your ways - and goes to church.
Got a nice job - that pays for honest work.

Now you struggle to be a good mother.
Trying to teach her what you oughta
You beg and plead because she's your daughter.
She thinks she's keen
but the girl is green, she's only 14.

It's been years since you cried
Now you have tears in your eyes
she calls you a "square" and says, "you don't care."
You know in your heart
she's bound to be another
Sly Girl.
Narrow Minds

Why, after all these years of overcoming ignorance and fears... in this day and time, there's so many people with narrow minds? We preach "Freedom of speech," is a Constitutional Right. Sometimes, that seems like commercial hype.

Gay lovers and lovers of a different race. Notice the frown upon on lookers' faces. Negative vibrations oppose to their affection. They squeeze each other's butt and are elated at how on lookers become irritated. Why after all these years of over-coming ignorance and fears... in this day and time, there's so many people with narrow minds?

You have never met me, so how can you judge me? I've been to prison, and now you stereotype me? I educate myself to raise above the blight. And because I speak proper English. You say, "I'm trying to act white." I can't help but wonder, "Why after all these years of over-coming ignorance and fears... in this day and time, do I refuse to possess a narrow mind?"

The answer should be obvious.

Alfred Brooks
I was ignorant of the heated confrontation she had with an inmate moments before I approached her with a simple question that required a simple answer.

So imagine my surprise when she struck me over the head with a blunt attitude of belligerence.

She's my case manager and only available avenue that can provide me with an answer to my question. For that reason, joined by other reasons, I outwardly demonstrated the professionalism that she allowed to be stollen from her.

I held my anger in check. However, I wasn't able to mask the stern stare in my eyes which said, "Fuck you bitch."

I turned and walked away. Hoping I wouldn't allow the ordeal to ruin my day. It made me question my sanity, And wonder, "Is it just me?"
It's Not just Me
Part-2

My case manager came to my cell, smiling. "Mr. Brooks," she said, "I'm looking for you.

My ego instantly, instinctually replayed my last encounter with her days earlier, where in, ego was sucker punched. Thus, ego and pride quickly joined forces in a call to arms. But my heart and intellect knew the wiser, and over-ruled negative emotion.

I got out of my chair and went to see what she wanted. There was no mention of what happened or what was said two days before. She explained what she needed and received an answer to a pressing question.

Within those brief few minutes, I fashioned the opinion, that her polite mannerism was her way of apologizing, without admitting an apology was due. At the conclusion, I thanked her for being a case manager who, "do qiv adawm." And she in turn, thanked me for being the person I am. I returned to my chair and watching t.v. feeling relieved that, "It's Not Just Me."

Anybody can have a bad day.
Passing

Today, I saw a familiar face
a reminder of a far away place.
The face did not seem to remember my name.
Nor I his.
But there was enough familiarity present
to recognize a face from my past.

We were two ships passing during the night
two travelers sharing the same curious silence,
two campers warming ourselves over the same fire.

We part company at first light
exchanging only smiles.

A memory descended upon my shoulder like a dove,
whispering into my ear
who that person was.
Adversaries sought to weaken me. 
But their efforts strengthened my resolve.
When adversaries embraced me
I swallowed pride, stood before the mirror
and looked deeply inside.

It was mine enemies who revealed to me my friends
It is my adversaries who keep me sharp and alert.

My realization of how enemies fear my thunder
is what gives me hints of my potential.
It was the obstacles in my path
that molded me into an Over-comer.

Countless times I prayed
that my enemies be, "damned,"
but in hind-sight, I honor them all
for pushing me to become the man I am.
Teaching
Mentoring
Kiss the Sky

Take these words
roll them up tight
examine how well they smoke

If half as good as I think they are
they'll make you laugh and cough and choke
These words are smooth and soft
guaranteed to get you off.

Do a good deed and pass them please
Pass these words around
rhymes from heaven
growing up from the ground
inspiring smokers to believe.

Ask me how I know it.
I know it, because I'm on rhythm when I wrote it.
was high

Alfred Brooks
A mother's love

In the heat of passion a child was conceived
Man and woman are equally pleased.
All living things must endure struggle
Little does she realize the pains of a mother.

For nine months I grew in her womb,
Until she laid in the delivery room.
She went through hell, screams and cries
The torture was over when the pain subside
And the room was filled with an infant's cries.
Glory be to God above.
There's nothing like a mother's love.

I laid all cuddled up in a tender hug,
Feeling so secure in mother's love.
A baby, all helpless and lame,
Depending on mother for every thing.

And I received it all, I never went without.
I could count on mother's love without a doubt.
I couldn't put on my pants without her help.
Momma was there when I took my first step.
She taught me how to chew my food, tie my shoes.
She held my hand the first day of school.

Momma gave me confidence and taught me pride
I grew into a young man of adolescence, started ignoring some valuable lessons. My mother was a least three times my age. But she could no longer tell me how to behave. I argued with my mother day and night. I said a lot of things that I had no right. She said, “Son you’re wrong! You’re turning bad.” “Remember this... a hard head, makes a tender ass.” She dropped her head and slowly turned. She whispered softly, “Boy, you’ll learn.”

One day, there I was at the end of the line. I realized then that mother wasn’t lying. Good times was gone, I could see the end. I saw everything clearly but couldn’t spot a friend. Beyond a doubt those were my darkest days... but I learnt the meaning of an old, old phrase that, “Blood, blood is thicker than mud.” And that sure rings true with a mother’s love.

She told me, “It makes no difference what they say you’ve done. I’m by your side all the way because you’re still my son.”
The words she spoke filled my body with chills
I cried aloud cause I knew
mother's love is real.
Selfless

I gave a man bread,
Not one "thank you" he said.
I gave a man more than he earned
and by his response, I felt burned.

When I gave a man much respect
he became the rudest person I've met
And I almost decided right then
to never go out of my way for strangers again.

But for some unknown reason
I assisted a strange who was in dire
I helped him obtain something he require
Afterward, I was personally inspired
Not because from him, I was given something back
But it was the joy, I adorned, by my selfless act.
A good day

I'm still here in this hell hole,
But as far as doin time goes,
I must say — it's been a good, day
    I went to breakfast for the first time in a long time.
    And I didn't have to stand in a long line.
Caught the CO looking the other way
    so I snatched me an extra food tray.
Got ready for work, but didn't have to go.
"All work and programs are cancelled," said the C.O.
I asked no questions, as I turnt around
Returned to the cell to write some ideas down.
    Put on my head-phones and blasted my radio.
    Police shouted, "Prepare for outside Rec."
I jumped up, "Heck, yeah! I got's to go."
Went outside and played my sport.
Didn't loose a game, so I stayed on the count.
Returned to the cell-block and took a long shower.
Laid back watching t.v. for about an hour.
Smoked a joint that was hid under my rack
Reached in my locker for a box of snacks
    A friend came by with a freaky porn book.
    You know I had to do more than just look.
    So up went the cell curtain
Returned the magazine after I was hurth.
Played chess and won best out of five.
Told my opponent, I'm through because I'm tired

Alfred Brooks
My cell-partner was nowhere around
I went to sleep soon as I laid down.
Woke up when I heard, “Prepare for chow!”
Learned what was being served, and changed my mind,
“I ain’t going now.”
But instead,
Me and my homie had us a food spread.
I supplied the sodas and the tuna.
He supplied the chips and the bread.
We ate enough to fill our bellies.
Topped it off with boxes of Debbies.
Three times, the mailman called my name.
The money I been waiting on, finally came.
Even got a letter and some “flicks”
of my partner and some chicks.

Today, nobody got stabbed or beat down.
CD’s wasn’t shaking any cells down.
Even the noise level in the cell house had
been kept way down.

I’m still here in this hell hole,
But as far as doin time goes,
I must say – it’s been a good day.
Giving

To reside in giving
is living.

It is the release
which gives peace.

Tight fist locks out joy
But open hands
Massages the softness of nature's
Smile.

Seeds become feed
the harvest become weeds
if they are not dispersed
to hearts in need.

Alfred Brooks
© 57
Naive

She's been sexually active for the longest time. She's more mature physically, than in her mind. Papa thinks his daughter is a virgin. "Wait until you're older," momma keeps urging. Young girl dreads to think what people will say when word spreads, "there's a baby on the way." When we walk through life with blinders on reality has a way of hit'n home.

You heard horror stories about drug abuse. The stories didn't prevent you from experimental use. The notion of becoming hooked made you laugh. Now, years later, you're in and out of drug rehab. When we're driving in traffic with blinders on there's a chance reality will hit us head on.

He and his clique was a band of brothers until shit hit the fan and they turned on each other. He broke all ties and severed relations. The No. 1 goal today is self perservation. Every role of the dice results in 'Snake Eyes.' Nobody knows who to believe because darkness obscures both truth and lies. Now regardless of what anyone choose to believe his blinders are lifted and he's no longer naive.
Keep up the March

Our ancestors came from the dark continent
under circumstances hard to circumvent.
Today we're a nation of many hues and tints
A robe of many colors under God and government
Many prejudices have been purged
but new struggles emerge.

So keep up the march. And love from the heart.
Take a strong stand... but hate no man.
Let us never ever forget any wisdom learned
Respect and honor must always be earned
Acknowledge the sacrifices of old
And try never to dishonor the fallen souls.

Love our neighbors and let the children live.
Teach by example, how to forgive.
Fight the good fight, because that's what it takes
to free humanity from ignorance and hate.
If we love from the heart,
others shall join our march
And all humanity will one day set differences aside
and march together, side by side.
Opportunity knocking

In a neighborhood, like most neighborhoods especially neighborhoods like yours and mine, walks a door to door salesman name, "Opportunity."

Mr. Opportunity carries a suitcase filled with an assortment of opportunities, they all come with a price, however, he has been known to give away some freebies.

The first house Opportunity approached, did not appear to be lived in, but instinctively, Opportunity knew that the home was occupied. Besides, the mailbox contained a few letters. And on the mailbox was the name of the residence. The home was owned and occupied by Mr. Fear.

Opportunity knocked on the front door. And sure enough Mr. Fear was inside. But Fear was too afraid to answer the door or even to acknowledge his own presence.

Opportunity, knocked more, and called out, "Hello, ... "Mr. Fear, are you home? Is anybody home?" He thought he heard movement, so he paused and listened for a response, before announcing,

"My name is Opportunity. I'm here to offer you some great opportunities. Perhaps, a few that you never imagined existed."

Silence was the only thing Opportunity heard. So he shrugged his shoulders saying, "Oh, well...missed again.

The next house Opportunity arrived at was occupied.
by Mr. Doubt. And when Opportunity knocked on that door, an inquiring voice shouted, "Who is it?!

"Mr. Doubt, my name is Opportunity. I have an assortment of opportunities to offer you if..."

Suddenly, the door flung open. Doubt stood there with a bewildered look on his face, and wearing only underwear and boxers, "Oh, who did you say you are?"

"Sir, I am Opportunity, and this is your lucky day.

"I don't believe in luck," Mr. Doubt, snapped.

"Excuse me. May I re-phrase that... This is your day to receive good fortune," smiled Opportunity.

"Sounds, mighty suspicious to me.

"Sir, if you will just allow me to show you what I have... I'm certain...

"I'm not interested. Besides you got nothing I want or need.

"How do you know? Sir. I'm only asking for a couple minutes.

"I'll give you two seconds to get off my property!" shouted Doubt, slamming the door in Opportunity's face.

The third house that Opportunity went to was owned by Procrastination. And when Opportunity rung the door bell a couple times, Opportunity saw someone peaking from behind some window curtains.

Soon as the curtain closed, a pair of feet could be

Alfred Brooks
heard hurrying toward the door. The front door quickly opened.

“Oh, my Lord,” said Procrastination, “it’s Opportunity at my door! I recognized you the moment that I saw you. Oh, wait!” Procrastination said, as if there was something important that needed to be done.

Procrastination shut the door in Opportunity’s face just as quickly as the door had been opened.

Opportunity was surprised to hear Procrastination call out from behind the door, “Give me a minute to pick-up a few things, the house is such a mess.”

Opportunity, demonstrated patience until it got tired of waiting, and decided to wait no longer. And just then, the door opened and Procrastination welcomed Opportunity inside.

“Have a seat over here and make yourself comfortable. I’ll be with you in a moment,” said Procrastination, rushing out of the room.

Opportunity opened his suitcase as Procrastination hurried pass with a toothbrush in mouth, at the same time lotioning his arms.

Procrastination returned huff’n and puff’n and apologizing. But everytime Opportunity started his presentation, Procrastination had some urgent reason to leave the room. There was food cooking that needed constant attention. Phone calls he had to make and answer. And E-mails to check. Even pets need to be fed.
Finally, Opportunity looked at his watch, closed his suitcase and left the home, apparently un-noticed.

Opportunity came to next house. And soon as he stepped onto the screened porch. Opportunity was greeted by the owner. They shook hands while exchanging warm smiles. The home owner introduced himself, "I'm Mr. Preparation, and I think I might know you. You are Mr. Opportunity?"

"Yes, sir. I am.

"I knew it. I knew I was right. I was out here on the porch awhile ago, when I saw you coming down the street and you stop at a neighbor's home. And I said to myself "Preparation," that looks like Opportunity, and it just might stop by here...excuse my manners, come inside, we can sit over there."

Preparation insisted on helping to carry the suitcase, "Oh, what a heavy bag," Preparation commented as the two of them hoist onto the table.

"Thank you," smiled Opportunity.

"Can I get you anything?" ask Preparation, "I have a fresh made pot of coffee..."

"That will do just fine, thank you," answered Opportunity as he open his suitcase. Suddenly, the telephone began to ring. Opportunity looked into the surprised face of Preparation and asked, "Are you going to answer that?"

Preparation leaned forward in his chair and tore the telephone cord out of the wall, saying, "they can call back."
I'm more interest in what you've got to say. Now show me whatcha working with," smile Preparation. Opportunity, smiled and nodded, okay." And their meeting continued for much of that day

The moral of this story is that:
The magnitude of our success upon who Opportunity find at home when it knocks on our door.
Walkin' that Walk

She's walkin' that walk in the penitentiary,
And Lord, knows I appreciate
how she struts pass me.
Every man with a number
wish they had her number.
She knows what she's got
and refuses to leave it in the parking-lot.
Her walk is sexy and lady like,
and she's not pretending to be a dike.

We inmates compete to see who gets to open the door
for that walk. "I'll get that door for you Ms," I smile.
And she responds, "Thank you, sir."
"Naw, thank you," I reply, as she walks bye.

I don't do any "cat-calling."
but I damn sho will do some, "eye-ball'n."
And if it's wrong for me to look,
Then I will be get'n booked.

She understands the nature of a man
and have no problem with us. lookin' when we can.
Sometimes I don't want to look
because that walk always says to me
"Get out the penitentiary."

Alfred Brooks
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Likes
attract likes
that's a fact we may not like
a reality we should not fight.

What is seen on the outside
is a reflection of what's on the inside
when you change
your choice of friends change
Do you find that strange?

Stupidity
attracts the companionship
of the stupid.
Misery
is most comfortable
among the miserable.

When your attitude changes
your atmosphere changes.
When expectations change
achievements change.
Do you find that, "strange?"
I don't any more.

Alfred Brooks
Be it

When I sought happiness
happiness often eluded me.
When I did grab happiness
happiness found ways to escape my grasp.

When I decided to "Be" happy
Happiness sought me out like a child
seeking a parent's embrace.

When I pursued love.
Love avoided my advances.
And displayed suspicion and distrust
But when I decided to "Be" loving. Love was
attracted to me...sincerely, trustingly.

When I toiled for wealth;
wealth was difficult to obtain, and maintain.
But now that I've chosen to tap my "inner wealth"
I am grateful for the abundance I shall always
possess. And wealth has become my friend and
we enjoy one another's company.

First, Be it.
And behold, you have it.

Alfred Branch
There's a teenager in Juvenile Hall
Staring at the four walls.
Contemplating his life
He begins to ball (cry).
He's been told that he'll never succeed;
never be anything but a criminal, a thief.
And his actions concurred with that belief.

But then he read something different in a book
and realized that he can choose to be someone other than a crook.
Words of optimism warmed his heart, creating a spark.
Sparks grew into flames, giving light to the dark.
The warmth of love filled his breast.
And for the first time, he could see
a way out of the valley of the shadow of death.

I've seen the power of a dream.
So, don't tell me it can't happen.
Caus, I've seen the power of a dream.

He kept his Hopes and Dreams in a secret place
where they could grow and thrive, and not
be stifled by bullshit and jive.
Slowly and courageously pushed bad habits to the side.
He chiselled some goals out of stone.

Alfred Brooks
And vowed never to intentionally do another man wrong. He parted company with all that could hold him back. The doors of opportunity opened. And he never looked back.

I've seen, the power of a dream. Don't tell me it can't happen caus, I've seen, the power of a dream.
In poetry
words are emancipated.
Free. Free to be what they may.

In poetry,
words and phrases that normally foes or friends
will exchange garments, and dress themselves in
uncharacteristic definitions; or lounge in the
nude, without embarrassment or apology.

In poetry
words select their own meaning,
depending on their mission,
and they speak-up without asking permission.

Many poetic words wear bright colors that help us
see their obvious truths,
while some poetic phrases conceal candor
behind esoteric robes.

I enjoy listening to poetry
But, it's on horns

Alfred Brooks
Black Pride

Youngman: "Black pride! Black pride! Black Pride!

Oldman: Whatcha proud about boy?

Youngman: I'm proud that my people over came decades of
          oppression and continue to march in the right direction.

Oldman: So what... that ain't nothing new. And what that
       got todo with you?

Youngman: Black pride! Black pride! Black Pride 

Oldman: Now, what is you so proud about?

Youngman: I'm proud of what African Americans contributed and
          sacrificed to bring to this nation a better life.

Oldman: So what... that ain't nothing new. And what
       that got todo with you?

Youngman: Black pride! black pride, black pride

Oldman: What you proud about, now?

Youngman: I'm proud that I am developing into a wise and
          knowledgeable man... in accord with God's plan. And in
          due time, I shall make enormous positive contribution
          to mankind.

Oldman: Now. That's all I wanted to hear. Yes, without
       a doubt, that is som'un to be proud about.

Alfred Brooks

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They told me that he's a child molester, and revealed documented proof.
Thus, a group of us, appointed ourselves prosecutors and executors, giving him reason to be weary; especially while others volunteer to be judge and jury.

We decided to try him again, and punish him more for his sin. Circumstances surrounding his case was vaguely learned, and we never considered the possibility his conviction could be appealed and over-turrened.

While we discussed what that man's punishment ought to be; A guilty conscience emerged from the shadows of my heart and shoot its finger at me. Then a voice in my head, said, "let he among you who has not committed a grievous wrong, cast his stone."

And suddenly, the stone that I held, became too hot to hold. And I relayed to the others the message from my soul. Because we all are washed in sin, We went separate ways, and the subject was never raised again.

Alfred Brooks
Wake-up Call

He thinks every C.O. is out to get him, or trying to set him up.
But his real problem is, "He don't know when to shut-the-hell-up."
He's at the center of most chaos that goes on in the pod.
But once a week he's at a religious service, playing with God.

He and his partner remind me of a couple crazy kids.
He said to me, "Pimp'n ain't easy."
And I replied, "Naw, but being a damn fool sure is."

His ex-wife remarried and has two more kids
but if you listen to him talk about her
you would think the woman is still his.
His family has no idea how low he has sunk.
I heard he was seen kissing on a punk.

Now, and then he lets you know that he has good sense
yet, 30 minutes later you wonder, "Where the intelligence went?"
I wish I could talk to him and give him some advice,
but all he wants from me is a soup, or a cup of ice.
Sometimes I'll feed him, although it's hard keeping myself afloat.
Besides, he's got 99 home-boys and he still stays broke.

If I did have 5 minutes of his undivided attention
there are a few things I'd say...with a little apprehension.
I might say something that goes like this:
"Youngman, I need to talk to you..."
This is serious, so don't think I'm trying to "dis."
I'm sure your momma worries about you. Her heart is in pain.
Cause her son is stuck in "stupid," and won't make positive gains.
Regardless, of why you're here, and who shares the blame.
Now is the time to prepare for the future that remains.

There are convicts who want you to remain in prison with them;
and they'll talk you into put'n yourself out on a limb.
They encourage you to be a penitentiary menace,
and get you to do something that will lengthen your sentence.
When the blind leads the blind, both become lost.
And since you're a follower, you the first to get tricked off.
It's good to have heart. But you also need "smarts."
Because, all heart and no brains, makes a "puppet on a string."
A puppet can be juiced into doin just about any thing.

Prison is not just razor-wire and concreet.
Prison is in the minds of those bound by old ways
and those who have accepted defeat.

Do you want to do another 10, 20, 30 years?
It can certainly happen, just ask some older peers.
You claim, "not to have much time left, and your sentence in done."
That may be true. But if you don't wise up, you've just begun.
Because until you learn to live civil among your fellow man
you'll be doin a life sentence on an installment plan.

Alfred Brooks
My advise is, get your GED, and some VoTech. Become 'self-taught.'
All growth and change, begins with "thought."
The more education and skills we obtain
the higher we can aim.
Gone are the days when we could say, "Society is the blame."

Everything in life is suppose to grow and evolve.
By opening our eyes, and expanding our minds is how
solutions are found and problems get solved.
If we leave prison as ignorant as when we came in
that my brother maybe our biggest sin.

God has blessings in store for you. But keep in mind,
the scriptures warns against, "casting pearls to the swines."
So why would God pour blessings into your life,
knowing your heart and mind ain't right?

But don't give up hope, regardless of the sentence you have
Keep your head up and never forget how to laugh.
Man's laws are always subject to change
But God's promises never change.
And remember this:
No amount of hatred or revenge is stronger than love.
And you can't put yourself in a hole that's
too deep for God to lift you out of.

I do appreciate your time and all,

Alfred Brooks
"Hopefully, you'll think of this as a wake-up call."
Warden's Take
(monologue)

Pardon, me for arriving here so late. I've been looking forward to giving 'you this, "Warden's Take."

Moments ago, I was on the phone with the Director; he warned me to be on the look-out for an undercover ACA Inspector.

Everytime those ACA inspectors come around, I feel the same way inmates feel when prison guards shake them down. Between you and I, ... those prison inspectors give me the creeps. And when I know they're on the way, it's hard for me to get good sleep.

At anyrate, most of their inspections are routine tokens. They're not going to shut the prison down, and they know there's no money for repairs or to replace anything broken.

So, let the snobs, do their jobs. Besides we Big-Wheels know it's "politics." And no matter what's your status in life, or how high-up you are on a VIP List, there's always a butt you've got to kiss... Now, you do the math.

I've been in corrections over 30 years. And I concur with my peers: "The conditions of our Corrections System is the worst that I've seen 'it,' - and I mean it.

I'd love to project an optimistic view, but from my perspective, that's difficult too. The prison that I run is designed for 800 beds. But our present day count, far exceeds that many inmate heads.

If the influx don't slow down or stop, I'll be.

Alfred Brooks

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forced to house inmates in tents and on roof tops, 
Don't laugh – do the math.

My inmate population continue to rise, while my 
Operational Budget continue to nosedive. 
All the signs indicate that there is a storm brewing. 
And when that predicted storm hits, there will be no place 
to hide. And the State will be forced to deal with the 
destruction caused by neglect and Bull-Jive.

I'm doing my best to prevent living conditions from 
getting out of hand. And you can already imagine that 
'prison food' has never been grand. One of the results of 
budget cuts is that food quality and quantity must be 
reduced when and where they reasonably can.

I explain to Offenders that the staff and I are not 
the ones to blame; besides every state-run prison is 
experiencing the same. But the inmates don't give a damn. 
They're simply tired of eating beans, baloney, green eggs, 
and turkey ham.

I'll say this about the majority of offenders: They just 
want todo their time, be left alone and go home. Most 
inmates at this facility are not troublesome. But a small 
percentage are no less than burdensome.

Any OD will admit, when asked, that to distinguish 
sheep from wolves is no simple task. Some people say

Alfred Brooks
you should treat all inmates the same. Well, I think that's insane. All inmates are not the same, and they don't all think and act the same. You cannot determine a prisoner's personality and character by looking at his conviction.

There are inmates who have never been convicted of a violent offense, yet, they are extremely hot-headed and violent. And vise-versa, there are offenders who have a violent past but today they are non-violent people.

What I'm getting at is, I treat offenders according to how their actions merit "how" they be treated and respected. The offenders will tell you that as Warden, I'm fair, but I can be tough. If they try to "B.S." me, I'll make their life rough. And I will lock the prison down if I must. Because Security and Safety are my No. 1 task.

And there are times when, locking the prison down makes good math.

Some of you want to know how I feel about private prison vs state prisons. My public view is that both share the same mission, "To Protect and Serve." And both carry out that mission well - as far as I can tell.

Personally, I wish the USA never would had "adopted" "prisons for profit."

One reason being, that nobody with an invested financial interest in private prisons, will ever want to see a significant reduction in the state's prison populations. Just think, if the Northern States had had a
meaningful invested interest in the continuation of slavery. There never would had been a war between the states. It's hard to abandon an idea while you profit from it.

Motives behind the continuous rise in prison populations are obscured by smoke. The moment elected officials were allowed to profit from private prisons, the idea of "reducing prison populations," became a joke.

The reality of all that, doesn't register in "Joe Public's" mind, because he's been led to believe that law makers are simply being, Tough on Crime. Which also equates to being hard on Corrections.

DOC officers and staff are some of the most dedicated and the hardest working State employees anywhere. But a growing number are of the opinion that law-makers don't care. My officers are over-worked and under-paid. They want things to change for the better, and I encourage them to demand-it. The current atmosphere has them feeling unappreciated, and taken for granted.

Our legislators seem concerned only with the next election. Therefore, the conditions and morale of corrections continue in the same downward direction.

I've come to terms with my living nightmare and my fears. Besides, I knew when I took this job, that it and when shit hits the fan. The Buck Stops Here.

I've already done the math.

Alfred Brooks
Mandelas

The rain must now cease,
Dark clouds must now vanish.
The sun must now appear.
My glorious hour has now arrived
Freedom must now be restored.

Keepers of Hell! Pick up your rusty keys and ask not "why?"
Destiny commands that Mandelas receive another try.
Besides, You had your chance to watch him die.

He has suffered from society's revengeful whip
and wear life-long scares of excruciating years.
Cried a river of lonely tears.
Anguishly viewed, betrothed loves
vaporize in the boiling pot of time.
Destiny believes, he has paid for his crime.

His clothes now soiled from mud
where he's forced to lay
while illiterate merciless simpletons watch him all day.
Jonah must rise from the belly of the whale
Release him now. Oh, keepers of Hell.

He is a new man, the light of his heart is fit
He possess inspirational might and profitable wit.
The shackles of imprisonment, no longer fit.

Alfred Brooks

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Let this be his day. This his hour.
No more waiting for tomorrow
Just as the infant must emerge from the womb
He too, must emerge from that tomb.

Think not, that this hour has come too soon.
Only God knows the moment of the
butterfly’s departure from the cocoon.
No excuses

Browsing through the library,
nothing specific in mind
I came across a black history book
It was a golden find.

Each page that I did read,
enlightened me indeed.
Read about men born slaves in their time
who struggled and broke chains that bind
Read about sister who raised children on their own
while working their fingers to the bones.

Read about black people who accomplished great things
who crossed valleys, climbed mountains to
realize their dreams.
Many was once called crazy, yet they persevered,
and over came; some went against great odds
and turnt losses into gains.

Read about people who demonstrated that,
regardless of one's dire circumstance,
you can lift yourself up when
prepared and given half a chance.

I read about ex-cons released from prison
who learnt from past mistakes and begin making good decisions
They became assets and not liabilities
Some became pillars in their communities

After days of reading
I had a renewed sense of pride
And then I became a little terrified
Realizing all that I read was the truth,
I was forced to admit that

I Have No Excuse.
Most of my dreams
have not come true
even though many were noble and grand.
But I have realized more than a few,
enough to encourage me to encourage you
to dream, always dream.

Most of my prayers
have gone unanswered
even though they were sincere and genuine.
But answers have come in enough ways,
enough times, to encourage me to encourage you
to pray...always pray.

Not all my friends
have been true.
But enough of my friends have come through,
enough to encourage me to encourage you
to keep trusting
And to thy on self
be true.