

*CAPTURED WORDS*  
*FREE THOUGHTS*  
#2 (Autumn 2006)

**Writings from The Poetry Workshop  
at The Champaign County Jail**

Including works by Nate Collins, Martines Gill,  
Jonathan Gilmore, Ron Good, Makaiah Grant,  
Phillip James, DeAndre Lewis, Robert "Chicago"  
McCollum, Thomas L. McDonald, Richard McNally,  
J.B.R., Michael Shaw, William T. Smith Jr.,  
Jason Walker, and Seth Weaver

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<http://cdms.ds.uiuc.edu>



### The Clock

By Jason Walker

A circle of such significance  
Sixty marks of mental anguish  
The short arm vaguely stating where the sun sits in the sky  
While the long arm moves with unbelievable regularity  
Followed by my anxious eyes  
The red arm flies over both nonstop  
The burning sun of this inside world  
Beige, white, black, red, and full of numbers

### In The City

Jonathan Gilmore

My mind rolls, hold on tight  
People come and go, strangers, some lonely passersby  
Wobbling in tune to some secret logic  
as the Cadillacs and Taxis cruise by  
See the electric lights, hear the church bells sing  
The skyline screams with broken dreams  
Yet the vibrant hum of the street makes the world  
Go 'round in this infinite place in time

### Cries of Life

DeAndre Lewis

It's sad to say and even worse to see  
Black on black crimes even within families  
We've fallen so far that funerals are the only place you'll catch us  
giving hugs coming from real love  
Sure, our ambition is to survive  
through the good and bad times  
But I wonder, when will this pain die?

### Devil Talks

By Robert "Chicago" McCollum

It's as if he seen my ability ta get doe radiate off me  
as he drove by in his cheap but expensive car  
He said MOE I kno you like shinin'  
cause I see that spark in ya right eye  
Cum Fuck witcha boy -N- you could be making stacks right now!  
You kno where my spot at right?  
meet me their at 4:30 NAW make it 5  
I remember it like it was yesterday  
when I walked through dat door  
-N- seen dem 2 38s in his shoulder holster  
-N- in his waist ban was dat PHAT AZZ 4-five  
He said be4 I get started po' yo self a drink  
an roll a few blunts of dis Strawberry -N- Kiwi lime  
As I inhaled the weed smoke he stared in my eyes 4 a second  
be4 he said, I kno you young MOE  
therefore Ima educate you on Hustle -N- Grind  
First Ima teach you how ta turn soft ta hard, but most importantly  
Ima teach you how ta distribute yo products through yo sell line  
Now look, you can do whatever da FUCK u gonna do  
wit yo money. But Remember Dat 60 % of that shit is mine  
-N- da first time apiece of my cash get messed up  
that's ah slice ta ya left wrist  
but the second time it happens Ima EAT'CHA FACE  
wit billy the 38 -N- kid that 4-fifth



**Relativity**  
**By J.B.R.**

Your mind  
To turn around  
Replace  
To make different  
Coins/currency  
Clothing  
Adjust  
Alter  
Adapt  
Switch  
Vary  
Revise  
Transform  
Modify

—change

**A Peek at My Past Afflictions**  
**By Seth Weaver**

Wake up on the floor at a quarter past four  
with the dog licking puke from my toes  
Grab myself a beer do a line off the mirror  
and watch the blood trickle down my nose

Addiction

Three friends, sixty plus beers, and a bottle of booze  
Without a care in the world, with nothing to lose  
Drink and drink throughout the night  
until morning when there was no more  
Impatiently waiting until we could re-cop at the store

Addiction

The adrenaline pulsing through my veins  
with the fury of a white rapid river  
The transformation of a pseudo-civilized being  
into a blood thirsty feral beast out on the prowl  
searching, seeking for a kill under the waxing of the moon  
Like the flick of a switch, Jekyll to Hyde. The blood-lustful thirst  
slightly quelled by the promise of bloody violence  
and the sweet masochistic pleasure found in pain

Addiction

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Thoughts of her penetrate my brain  
as desire consumes my essence, searing my very soul  
My only concern is to satisfy and please this new found goddess  
If she would only ask for the world  
I would succeed where so many else have tried and failed  
or breathe my very last breath trying

Addiction



## **Energy of the Night**

**By Nate Collins**

Late nights, being the life of the party  
Pop a pill, snort a line, ravage my body  
Eventually my brain is confused  
About who demands the abuse  
Could it be my mind gone to the limit?  
Or maybe it's my heart telling me to let go?  
Whatever it is I feel that I'm stuck  
To this habit of swagger  
All to be the energy of the night  
One deranged college kid on the move

She is amazing in all aspects of life  
Her beauty has me thinking why  
She saved this deranged frat boy on the edge  
Now its late nights with her instead  
She transcended the energy of the night  
And turned it into the last 3 years of my life  
One day marriage calls  
Love  
That's my new addiction

## **Gambling**

**By Michael Shaw**

The thrill of winning a big pot  
The fantasy of a better way of life  
My mind starts racing  
As I begin to dream big

Roll those dice  
Draw for high card  
Pull the one armed bandit  
Watch the metal ball bound  
    on the spinning wheel  
Stay, hit, or fold?  
Scratch off another ticket  
Check those six numbers  
Which horse today?

Please God, help me win  
    I will help my church  
        I will help my family  
            I will be a better person

I wake up penniless with  
    a sick feeling inside  
You lose more than you win  
    but play over and over again

What do I do now?



**Secret**

**Jonathan Gilmore**

My thoughts twirl toward her  
I wish I had a rose  
I'm running up escalators from pit to pit  
In the company of a mesmerizing lady  
*Are you receiving guests?*

Oh your neck—a lily of immaculate whiteness  
Let's talk about all that is good and beautiful  
This happened in a lost century  
I dream of her, where does that place desire?

Breathless gazing into your eyes  
Eyes that hypnotize, eyes filled with oceans of beauty  
The air has states, not places  
I'm on the outer earth watching the sky above darken to blue matter  
But I'm not waiting in vain here in the atmosphere  
There's a friendly warmth  
Wonderful, phenomenal, fantasia, silk  
Your hair that is

I should share this secret, but I don't  
And in the eyes of all that is grand  
It's not the way it's supposed to be  
So I sigh, but then smile thinking of  
Ambrosia pressed light on her lips  
Like an unconsumed wafer

Nothing makes me smile like you  
So I'm grateful just to be grateful

**Change**

**By Jason Walker**

Change: to make or become different: to alter: to replace  
Change....is it necessary?  
But change what? Change who?  
Is it just me who needs to change?

For no matter how poetic I may be  
or how well I can elucidate my faults  
these are the characteristics that make me uniquely wonderful

Yet the system is unreservedly enthusiastic  
about dipping into the psychoactive pharmacopoeia  
to ladle up a fruit punch of behavioral modification drugs  
which impose a short-term placidity, yet ultimately leave me  
with more short circuiting synapses than before

As a result, I, like countless others,  
am left with an at times unbearable mind  
swollen with unspent rain, a side effect of being  
a mere combatant in this sad war between self improvement  
and a crooked system fueled by merciless imprisonment

In fighting this war I've been left with a paucity of ambition,  
yet spiritually I'm strong willed, confident, and driven

**A Diction**

**by Seth Weaver**

enunciation  
or words regarding clearness  
that is a diction



### **Change**

**By William T. Smith, Jr.**

Denim rhythms in my head  
Rough like the texture of cloth  
I was bred  
Colorfast, burning umber  
Crimson red  
Materially torn asunder  
Wanton scorn stop and wonder  
Attempt to unravel threads tangled  
Hopes and dreams once to hold  
Sit discarded, bent in folds  
Surreptitiously mangled  
Emphatically enough  
Writing on a wall of solitude  
Another surface rough  
Combining sentences  
Measured and tapered  
For a million and one  
Orange jumpsuits  
Twelve tailors and seamstresses  
Interweaving irregular threads  
Into a concrete fabric  
Without thought  
Nor reason nor rhyme  
To the biased consequences  
Placed on us by inspector 245  
Then think—there are 244  
Other adjudicators times 50  
All doing the same thing  
Saying:  
“these” go on the rejected pile  
No living!  
No lives!

Only shells of existence  
Like tattered garments  
Somebody used to wear  
Maybe even I  
Wishing to be reborn into  
An indestructible fabric  
That don't fade  
Don't tear  
Don't give  
Fit to form smooth  
Seamless, flowing, carefree  
Like the finest gabardine

### **The Crow**

**By Jonathan Gilmore**

Like the crow  
A scavenger  
I am feathered from head to toe  
Fly, fly, flight  
The clouds tumble beneath me  
As the sky expands  
I surrender to the air

### **My Secret**

**By Makaiah Grant**

Secret garden like secret lovers oh so passionate  
Or maybe it's the classified confidential secret  
Locked away and sealed without a key  
For better or for worse, who's to say anything?



**The Touch of an Angel**

**By Jonathan Gilmore**

To touch is to feel  
Your perfume is ecstasy  
Your hair is radiant  
Those beautiful hands hold the weight of the world  
And your mind! Your intellect burns

So who am I?  
One not so worthy of this Angel?  
Breathe my soul as it shivers up your spine  
To the crest of your neck as I offer a soft kiss  
Friends and lovers we lay down  
I mean no harm, want no wrong  
Long only for beauty unleashed

Be not afraid!  
Because to touch is to feel  
To be dead is to die no more  
So I tell you the time has come  
For us to feel alive again

**Stereotypes**

**by Jason Walker**

criticized by men  
suits sitting without regret  
we all meet our maker

**Pain, Then Came Change**

**By Phillip James**

The things I thought were harmless  
at my sweet young age  
have become the third line of my book

I'm scared to go on  
I thought my life was over  
That I was nearing the end  
My eyes got heavy and full of tears  
As I dropped down to my knees  
Regretting that I was ever born  
If I had a second chance  
I would change the path I have taken

If I had three wishes I would give one  
to someone who has a broken heart like me  
And then I would make my dreams a reality

So many times I have taken this road of pain  
and no matter how hard I try it all ends up the same  
I want a life with no more fears  
I want a life with no more tears

I pray every night that God will see  
Just who this lost soul is pleading to be  
For despite my years of committing crimes  
I know God can forgive with a little bit of time  
Despite the years Satan brought nothing but strife  
Oh God please help me build an acceptable of life



**The Afflictions of Addiction**

**By Thomas L. McDonald**

What it's like to be addicted:  
One could say I'm afflicted  
Just the average dope-fiend  
Nothing about my life is serene  
Another alcohol abuser  
Looked at by the world as a loser  
I used to live and lived to use  
My whole life controlled by booze  
My addictions have cost me a lot of time  
in *jails, institutions, or death*  
I ended up like all the rest:  
A.A., N.A., the twelve steps  
Kind of like a workout with so many reps  
Seems that they're all the same  
Everyone calls me by my first name  
Will it ever stop? I don't know  
but I sure as hell hope so

**A Letter to My Addiction**

**By Makaiah Grant**

I know we've have had some ups and downs  
I used to love you so much!  
At one time you were my favorite in the world  
You used to make me feel so special

But I'm on to you now  
For I have wizened up  
Why should I love you when you want me dead?  
You are the reason I've missed out on so much in life  
Now I despise you in every way!

**Keep It, It's Yours**

**By Nate Collins**

Ashley, hey can you hear me?  
I am running late, sorry, I am on my way  
Got something I need to ask you  
Remember the first time we met?  
Your eyes pulled my heart from my chest  
That day I learned what love really meant  
I owe you an apology, for I acted a fool  
My intentions were to stay on top of that barstool  
Nevertheless you helped me up and  
Whispered "Nate, keep your mouth shut!"  
Or how the little things made me so pissed  
You cured them with an amazing kiss  
Sorry it took so long to notice  
Thank you for helping me get focused  
I owe you a lot no doubt  
Remember that thing from my chest you pulled out?  
Keep it, it's yours.  
For today and many more  
I love you!



## Hope

By Ron Good

Hope. Ha! Ha! Ha!  
What a word  
Hope turns to heartaches and failure  
Hope, Ha what a joke  
As a child we are Full of Hope  
What a deceitful word Hope  
Most of the time it's better to be drunk or full of dope

Ha! Ha! Ha! Hope  
As a child we stay outside or in our room  
We hope, hope that our father hasn't woke up mad  
and won't lose his mind soon  
If this happens we can only hope for a short verbal beating  
or a less painful slap  
We are full of hope that mom will come home soon  
OH NO! Dad started drinking at noon and now it's four  
He's swaggering and staggering

Hope, what a great concept  
We no longer have to hope, look boys, here comes Mom  
As we ran to meet her at the door of her car  
It's alright now boys we won't have to run far  
Hope yeah, isn't that great!  
Look brothers there's our mom, so we all can relax  
She just walked in the back gate

Now that we're grown and are one with God  
We pray and hope all the violence and hatred will stop  
We hope for love, respect, and peace

## A Sinner's Prayer

By Martines Gill

Heavenly father please hear me tonight  
I need guidance to live my life right  
Sometimes the pressure is so hard to bear  
I often wonder if anyone cares  
How can I wake up and face a new day  
knowing I have to live my life this way?

Lord forgive all my sins  
I want to change but where do I begin?  
Give me the strength to resist the wild life I desire  
Help me escape the nightly gunfire  
And Lord bless my mother who cries every night  
worrying I'll be killed in another gang fight

Heavenly father please answer my prayers  
Please let me know if you're listening up there  
When will it end? What was it all for?  
Was it to prove *yeah, I'm down, I'm hardcore?*  
I wonder how will I die,  
by a bullet wound or a knife in my side?

Heavenly father please hear me tonight  
give me the courage and the strength to live my life right  
show me the way lord, show me the light  
Help give my heart peace so I don't have to fight

And thank you for forgiveness lord  
Thank you for being there  
But most of all thank you  
for listening to a sinner's prayer.



### Observation

By William T. Smith, Jr.

You look  
I look  
With looks beyond seeing  
With visual hints beyond trivial meaning  
Inquisitive glints  
Look forward  
Look past  
Looking  
Searching  
Lingering looks  
Last long after that  
Memorable split second merging  
When it seemed we were locked  
In a mutual gaze of infinity  
And I could detect the birth of stars  
In your eyes  
Of galaxies formed  
Of an alignment born  
Of edges far  
Far out there  
Where no man has ever  
Dared to travel  
Where no man has ever  
Cared to look

### Whos'it

By Richard McNally

To think you go unseen is to deceive yourself  
In this psychic game of cat and mouse you are both  
Always playing many roles, careful now you'll forget  
Who you are, ah, but that's what you expect of me  
True, you are the "voices," and can only be seen in my head  
So there's room enough for endless rounds of the game  
I know you're real, yet dare not speak a word  
Of the incessant babble and static exchanging  
My voice, your voice, whos'it going to be?  
Comfort comes when I realize  
We can share this space a while longer

### Practicing Principles

By Phillip James

1. Stop doing drugs, so you can stay in school  
Acknowledge life as your teacher  
And learn these rules
2. Don't sleep all day and miss out on life  
Don't grow dumb in understanding  
how to walk upright
3. And don't hate your brother  
because of his freedom to speak  
Control your attitude and let him preach
4. Don't lie, don't steal, don't boast with pride  
about your life of sin, as if you love to ride
5. Don't read this poem and believe you're cool  
to break the law and think the judge is a fool
6. Because the law forbids us to fight and kill  
The reason the Bible was created  
is to guide your will
7. Now practice these principles and live in peace  
Don't forget I'm wisdom  
And my ways you shall keep



This is a quarterly publication, made possible by the love and sweat of our volunteers and the hard work of imprisoned men, writers who have sought empowerment and solace in the strength of *Captured Words / Free Thoughts*.

If you are imprisoned and would like to contribute to the next issue, or if you are free and would like to lend your assistance, or if you are wealthy and care to make a donation to our humble magazine, then please contact:

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