

A WORLD FREE OF UNFETTERED HOPE

I woke up with wings, my world kissed by the exotic presence of Pulchritudinous, she in her purity, leaving me without weight, feeling the promise of a blessed day. I blinked my eyes, opening and closing them with practiced deliberation, wiping away the sleep, the back of my hand pushing back and forth, my version of the Karate Kid. Dull eggshells, drab greys, and faded blues greeted my sight. I sat up facing the clouded portrait of my unkempt image, Claude Monet's impressionism pushing forward in my high definition reality. A sense of normalcy had returned and life was if not good definitely serviceable.

My cellmate spoke jumbled sentences, imitating the 1984 Olympic performance of Carl Louis, giving a perfect impression of the teacher on Charlie Brown. He aimed to pass time more than communicate as fettered by hope he was twenty-one days away from a proposition fifty-seven hearing that could potentially send him home one year before his 2020 release date.

On the previous day, January-08-2019 Governor Jerry Brown having saddle bagged pardons and commutations had mounted his mare and trotted off into the sunset Ronald Regan like. Gavin Newsome took his place, a hair triggered first responder, blaring sirens announcing his arrival, toddler in one hand water house in the other, Eddie Murphy's forty-eight hours a new sheriff had emerged. The dream fog lifted releasing the slipknot, allowing the chains to fall, ushering in liberation.

Clarity conversed in tongues, taking meditative breaths, in for five Mississippi's out for five, repairing vision with laser precision. Nelson Mandela took hold of my hand, his calloused grip firm and authoritative, "lift your head, straighten your back, and tighten your boots. The struggle continues." I smiled my delight before responding, "Mine would be an honored pleasure only delivered through God's grace. I got nothing coming, I did the worst thing a man could do, and I took a life. I killed an innocent man for no reason. I am okay sir I promise."

Lucidity in all of her ambiguity, loved, hated, and revered appeared gift wrapped by the moment's reflection delivered peace. Unlike the Vietnamese brother's beautiful rendition of Frankie Beverly's the morning after my cell, complete in its belligerent institutionalized high definition was just that: my cell. I paused in suspended animation; a rebellious streak ran a three-foot line down the faded blue paint covering the cells door, my cell's door. I could fix it; in fact, I could tend too many of the things hopes fog led to my neglecting, starting with the maintenance of my cell, moving to the maintenance of the physical, emotional, spiritual, and perhaps everything else the fetters of hope that promiscuous jezebel who had thoughtlessly tailed Governor Brown's departure.

I lowered my lids, needing a moment to reflect on reflections, contemplate my options, and plot the day's course. It was Tuesday, I had group later in the afternoon, Create a healing society

with Dave Mashore, and Armando Lawrence, progressive brothers presenting powerful content, a content that thanks to my recent liberation I would be able to thoroughly internalize and appreciate. I no longer had to rush, cramming, studying flashcards, practicing memory techniques, and stressing myself out in the process. With final exams postponed and me once again buried under the mire of Life without the possibility of parole plus the ten years, I would be required to serve in the afterlife I received a pardon, pun intentionally unintended.

I breathe, a deep belly breath, one, two, three, four, five, while the kid continues his impression of Charlie Browns abhorred educator. His voice is barely audible. "Am I being rude," I ask myself before engaging a five count exhale. My mind quieted, residing where I resided I became fully conscious of my place in the world where the prisons freedom in its abstract immediacy no longer existed.

To comprehend my awakening, you must understand my slumber. Commutation season some called it, yes commutation that illusive siren, the modern day Marilyn Monroe that left one like the crack addict committed to assisted suicide.