SINCE WE'VE BEEN GONE

Since our last spring publication of the Word is Out, lots and lots has happened at the Prisoner Correspondence Project. First of all, the student movement has gone to hibernation for now, which has given all of us at the PCP a little bit of a breather. Quebec has a new Primier, Pauline Marois, the first woman premier the province has seen. Her party, the Parti Quebecois, promised a reversal of the proposed tuition increase that the Liberal party had put into motion, and as a response the student movement went pretty quiet... for now.

More directly about the project, though: for a while during the summer months we had only five collective members, so we felt very under capacity and began recruiting new members. We have been getting more letters from new folks than ever, which is amazing and inspiring but has also been hard to keep up with! If you tried getting in touch with us lately, especially over last summer, and wondered what was taking us so long to get back to you, probably it was mostly the fact that we were only five! Currently we have eight collective members, and three interns from the HIV/AIDS course at Concordia University. The interns have really been helping us get on top of resource requests and new penpal matchups, as well as helping us to digitize our resource library! It's been great. We regained one collective member we had thought we had lost, who came back to us after a while of being on hiatus. However, we lost a different member when she moved from Montreal to Toronto. She is in the process of starting a PCP chapter there! This is a big deal for the PCP in general, because we have dreamed for a long time of having chapters in different cities who can network and share ideas, but ultimately will work autonomously and focus their efforts locally. It's pretty exciting! We recently had a visioning day, during which we in Montreal and our ex-collective-member in Toronto had a speakerphone call so that we could touch base, ask each other what was up, laugh together and of course cry big, rolling, gay tears.

The PCP has started putting into motion a project we are calling the Inside Advisory Committee, which we have also dreamed about for a long time. It looks like it will be a small group of our inside members, being in touch together to discuss, strategize, and write about incarceration from their own perspectives. They will be sharing their thoughts will the broader PCP members in the form of a new newsletter.

In terms of events, since last issue we had a dance party fundraiser in the Spring that brought in over four hundred dollars! It was a sexy drag cabaret and a lot of people had a really good time at this event. We also tabled at the Philly Trans Health Conference for the first time, and made some networking friends in different cities. We have rewritten a workshop that will be given next week, that we are calling Penetrating the General Population. It will explore the criminalization of HIV transmission in Canada, and aim to draw links between some recent Canadian legal shifts and the history of government policies in both the U.S. and Canada during the AIDS panic of the 1980s. Lastly, many of us were at Montreal's first screening of United In Anger, a film by Jim Hubbard about the organizing work of ACT UP in New York in the late 80s and early 90s in response to the AIDS crisis. It was so incredibly inspiring to be in that room!

We can't wait to get this edition of The Word is Out to you. Stick with us & enjoy one another's writing, and take care of each other too.

AS TIME COULD ONLY TELL

by David Jr.

listen to my plea:
As time could only tell were it all become
For neither of it, cause it all remains the same
As time could only tell like when it first ever rained
Now than you'll find a way to change your hurt and pain
If not you might stay deep insane
As time could only tell, But always remember
Stay strong in every way
Just like when you were a child full of love and peace
As time could only tell, like the way I've always thrived
To keep my pride, from the darkness of evil that comes my way.
So now I must say, Thou shall not fear, from now till the end of my time.
As time could only tell,
cause growing up to become a father was no easy way.
Trying to stay alive was a must. As time could only tell
Because some days and some nights, I find myself going out of control
Can't even think why I feel so cold, As time could only tell
Like the sun when it appear way above, only soon to disappear,
Into bright shinning stars, that lay before the darkness of our time.
As time could only tell, so let us all be patient in finding ourselves,
In peace with many nights and days, to be filled with our Pride and Joy,
With lots of blessings from above, cause time could only tell

TWINKIE TIME

by P.N. Champion/Catherine Lynn Quick

Twinkie Time
Who can resist,
that tasty treat.
On it you can subsist,
and the flavor can’t be beat.

Spongy light cake,
with a vanilla filling,
for heaven’s sake,
it fits the billing.

I share them to,
With my lover Tim,
it something we do,
thats between me and him.

Then we lay nude,
and I see his hard sign,
this may be crude,
but it’s Twinkie Time.

A PLACE FAR AWAY

by P.N. Champion/Catherine Lynn Quick

As I lay me down,
at the end of the day.
I find myself drifting,
to a place far away.

I see you smile,
and hear your sweet voice.
In this place far away,
I can forget that horrible choice.

Yes I chose to walk away,
and I lost your loving heart.
But in this place far away,
I can have a new start.

I know it's not real,
as I hold you close to me.
I was stupid and wrong,
and to blind to see.

It is all I have left,
of our loving life.
So I can still hold you close,
and call you my wife.

As I lay me down,
at the end of the day.
I'm with you my love,
in this place far away.

TAKE NOTICE

by Billy

Picture the snow slowly falling, beauty for all to see
A man stands at his window, alone but not lonely
No one knows when the snow will stop, or when it will come again
The man in the window knows his battle will come
Whether by sword or by pen
No one can ease the forces of nature
We know it's beyond our control
The man in the window meets a man in the street
Two singles that now form one whole
Powerless to the needs instilled at birth
Fighting the odds for a peaceful calm earth
When is a choice no longer a choice
Listen to me I too have a voice
Not looking back or too far ahead, I've already made my choice
Frustration bottled up deep inside
Ready to raise my voice
I've dealt with persecution for far too many days
I say this "Nothing will change the course of my ways, I'm gay."
People "take notice", it's time you heard my cry
No longer will I be denied, it's my turn to try

NASTY REMAND "BURRITO"

By C George Winsor

Ingredients:
2 instant noodles, beef (mama brand is best) – lightly crushed (3/4" pieces)
2 packets Beef soup base mix
2 packets cheezies (Hawkins is best, Cheetos work) – crushed to a coarse "flour"
2 small bags BBQ potato chips or spicy Doritos (Nacho, etc) – crushed
2 single servings hot sauce (I like Wing's Hot Chili as it has sweetness)
6 single servings Cheez Whiz (or real cheese/ knock-off cheese sauce)
Hot/boiling water

Equipment:
At least 2 bags from ingredients
At least 3 hefty novels/books (Larry McMurtry or Robert Jordan work well)

Instructions:
1. Place one bag inside another (longest inside if different) – this is the "oven" so be careful no holes are made by crushing.
2. Mix dry ingredients thoroughly in bag.
3. Mix wet ingredients - if possible - in a separate container
4. Add water to bag until just visible along sides of mixture
5. Fold bag top over (careful, that water is HOT!)
6. Knead lightly (a little more to mix the wet ingredients if not in other container) DO NOT CRUSH!
7. Place horizontal (folded edge up) with books at either end to hold form (rough square, about 1" thick)
8. Add a book on top to hold heat in and "pressure cook"
9. Wait a few minutes
10. Unwrap and enjoy (you MAY have to mix a little more)

Optionals:
2 single servings honey
Salt
Pepper
Ketchup
BBQ sauce

Hope you have a heart condition, because this thing can only give you one! Heh-heh.Seriously, though, this is the most popular recipe for a "Remand Burrito" I have ever seen.

RECIPE CALL OUT: A PRISONER COOK BOOK

One of our inside members had an amazing idea to collect recipes from folks on the inside. If we get enough submissions, we could publish the recipes in future newletters or eventually make it into a zine. So if you have creative and tasty ideas to share of what people can make on the inside, please send them to us!

RESOURCE LIBRARY OF THE PRISONER CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT

The following is a list of the resources available through our resource library as of Winter 2012. All resources are provided free-of-charge to prisoners and are yours to keep.

We are constantly in the process of updating the resource library, so please forward any suggestions of things you would like to see available or resources you have access to that you would like to share

Please note that we are only able to send five or six at a time. If you request more than that, they will be sent in batches over several weeks, so please indicate which are the highest priority and we will attempt to send them in that order.

Emotional Support

Support (sexual abuse & survivorship) - In a time when sexual assault and abuse are an increasing problem and when most women have been sexually abused in one way or another, Cindy Crabb (Doris Zine) brings us a document showing ways to prevent sexual violence and support survivors of sexual abuse.

Taking care of Your Body and Mind - A pamphlet on safer slashing / safer cutting in prison put out by PASAN

Survival in solitary: a manual written by and for people living in control units by California Prison Focus - A collection of writing, poetry, and information about coping with solitary confinement and life sentences

Trying to understand self-injury - A short zine written by Black Ice Press, about disassociation, and the reasons why folks might choose to use self-injury to cope

Safer Sex

Beyond Appearances/Au Dela des apparences - For prisoners, sex workers and other "high risk" communities, on HIV AIDS issues, including prevention. Pour des prisonniers/eres, des travailleurs/euses du sexe et les autres communautes a risque elevee, sur le VIH, y compris la transmission.

C it's no joke: Hep C/ C'pas un joke: Hep C - A guide explaining how to transmit Hep C, including tips on safer tatooing, sex, and drug use. Un guide en expliquant comment transmettre le Hep C, y compris la tatouage, le securisexe, et les drogues

Queersafe - A zine (not specific to prisons) about safer sex for queer men and women, different sexually transmitted diseases, and taking care of specific body parts put out by Head and Hands in Montreal

Turnover: A collection of HIV prevention comics - Turnover, through comics and illustration, explores issues of youth and HIV transmission, barebacking, and physical and emotional wellness.

Risk in prison - Two articles written by Matthew Jones (incarcerated) and Liam and Bridget from the Prisoner Correspondence Project (non-incarcerated) talking about the concept of "risk", and "risky sexual behavior" in prison

You Improvise to Survive: Addressing sexual 'safety' for Queers Inside and Outside of Prisons - A short compilation put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project of the first submissions we received for the Fucking without Fear resource series.

What if I'm HIV positive? - A general, non-prison specific resource about what you should know if you test HIV positive

Safer barebacking" (not prison specific)- An article about how to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV/AIDS and other STD's/STI's when fucking without condoms

VIH y el joint" (Spanish only)- A basic resource sheet put together by PASAN about reducing the chance of transmitting HIV in prison

The Botton line (not prison specific) - A gay man's guide to anal health: how the ass works, what it does, how it relates to other parts of the body, and how to get maximum pleasure from sex with minimal pain or dammage

Women Lovin - Developed, designed and written by women: solid information on sexual health issues for queer women combined with practical tips and risk-reduction strategies. Only sent to women's prisons.

Hepatitis C Infosheet - basic information on the virus

Reading this can save your ass - Safer rimming tips

50 things you should know about hiv & safer sex (abstract)

Living with HIV/Hep C

A guide to HIV drug side effects - for people living with HIV/AIDS

Living with HIV: starting points - information on HIV and AIDS, how to stay healthy, what does CD4 count and viral load tell you, next steps

Pozitively healthy (not prison specific) - a gay man's guide to sex and health in Canada

A practical guide to complement therapies - for people living with HIV

A practical guide to herbal therapies - for people living with HIV

A practical guide to HIV drug side effects - for people living with HIV/AIDS

A practical guide to HIV drug treatment - for people living with HIV

A practical guide to Nutrition - for people living with HIV

HIV and Hep C coinfection - answer some basic questions about living with HIV and hepatitis C

HIV disclosure - a legal guide for gay man in Canada

HIV viral load testing - introduces the viral load test and answers basic questions about how it fits into a treatment plan.

Hepatitis C Peer support group manual (non prison specific) - tips and tricks for starting a support group

Hepatitis C Pamphlet - Newly diagnosed, the basic facts,

treatment options

Hepatitis C: Managing Common Symptoms and Treatment Side Effects - for people living with Hep C

Hepatitis C: Get the Facts - all the info in plain language and detailed illustrations

Living with HIV and HepC Co-infection - offers key information on living with both viruses, covering useful topics such as HIV and hepatitis C basics, the effects of co-infection, ways to stay healthy, treatment strategies and preventing transmission.

Writing/ Literature on HIV/ AIDS

What causes/defeats AIDS - AIDS project Los Angeles, Annual report 2006.

If We Have To Take Tomorrow - ist a collection of writing about same-sex and same-gender desire, and HIV/AIDS by and for gay black men.

To be left with the body - This collection, put out by AIDS Project Los Angeles (APLA) is dedicated to poetry, prose, and photography written by and for HIV positive folks about the marginalization and criminalization of queer and HIV positive communities.

Corpus: volumes 4, 5, 6 - Corpus, put out by AIDS Project Los Angeles, and Gay Men's Health Crisis, is an HIV prevention publication that brings together health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities: incarceration, racism, policing.

Issue 4 is about women's relationships to gay men and AIDS;

Issue 5 is about rural gay identity and AIDS;

Issue 6 is the International issues, and explores shifting global responses among gay and queer men to AIDS.

The De-gaying of AIDS & Reclaiming Culture / La desho-mosexualizacion del SIDA - Available in both Spanish and English, these short essays speak to how AIDS has been de-gayed, and the effects of this on, among others, prisoners and communities of colour.

Gay boy talk: stopping HIV infections among young gay men (Also available in Spanish) Not prison specific - The purpose of this article is to discuss the importance of influencing discourse about homosexuality at the social and cultural levels in HIV-prevention efforts targeting young gay men. The discussion is based on Sexual Stories, a study which sought to understand the interpersonal, social, and cultural contexts in which behavioral risk for HIV infection occurs among young gay men.

Our Events

Imprisoned Pride: how queer and trans prisoners get written out of mainstream pride movements - A zine put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project that is a transcript and photos from an event we organized in summer of 2008, during Montreal Pride festivities; an anthology of writing by queer and trans prisoners about pride.

You Improvise to Survive: Negotiating Sexual "Safety" for queer and trans folks, inside and out - A short compilation put together by the Prisoner Correspondence Project of the first submissions we received for the Fucking without Fear resource series. These submissions were the focus of several workshops and events we have put on with folks on the outside

Beyond prisons, towards community strategies - the transcription of a panel we held in the fall of 2009 on supporting work within and against prisons

Erased Histories: Community Responses to HIV/AIDS - The transcription of a panel of different (mostly gay and lesbian) community activists about their work around HIV and AIDS in the earlier days of the epidemic, including how AIDS issues interact with courts, cops, and prison issues.

Building abolition futures - the transcription of a panel from spring 2010 about how sex offender panic is linked to homophobia and the recent oush for sex offender registries

Hell No, We Won't Go: In Conversation with Laura Whitehorn - The transcription of an interview we conducted with former political prisoner Laura Whitehorn, on anti-prison organizing, HIV mobilizing, and being gay in prison.

Resource Lists

The Word is Out! Issues 1 to 8: Our very own Prisoner Correspondence Project newsletter. Includes featured resource, prisoner art and writing, callouts for our different projects, and a list of all our services.

Cellcount: A general newletter / list of services and resources offered by PASAN, the Prisoner HIV/AIDS Support Action Network. Also includes tips on safer drug use, etc. We will send you the most recent edition, though you can also request backissues (Canada)

A resource list for the Incarcerated Native American: Includes listings for newspapers for Native American prisoners, book program listings, legal resources, and education programs for prisoners (USA)

Queer and trans zine resource list: a list of addresses and contact information for self-published 'zines

Prisoner resource guide: a collection of organizations and services offered to prisoners(USA)

Prison Book Programs: National prisoner resource list: expanded version of the prisoner resource list (USA)

Locked out: resource for LGBTQ prisoners (USA)

Resource list for Straight/ non-queer inmate

Canadian publication for prisoners

Legal

TGI Justice Project - A brief overview of the programs and services offered by the Transgender, Gendervariant, and Intersex justice project, and how to contact them (USA)

The Sylvia Rivera Law Project An overview of SRLP, it's mandate and programs, and ways to contact them for more information (USA)

Jailhouse Lawyer's manual - A handbook of legal rights and procedures for use by people in prison. 36 chapters informing prisoners of their legal rights and how to secure these rights through the judicial process.

Pennsylvania Legal aid and pro bono organizations resource list

Tattooing

Tatooing and you: the safeguards within prison walls - A pamphlet / guide on safe tattooing inside prisons, things to consider, and materials to use

Think Before You Ink - prisoners perpetual calendar

Drug Use

My crack kit/Mon kit crack" - A short guide (pamphlet size) showing how to safely use crack, and reduce the risk to your body and your lungs. Un guide démontrant comment utiliser du crack, en minimisant les risques et le dommage au corps et aux poumons.

Guide DOPE: Travail du sexe, drogues, alcool et autres substances (Francais seulement) - Un guide (non particulier au milieu carceral) comprehensif au sujet de la reduction des méfaits en utilisant les drogues et des autres substances

Safer shooting - A postcard with short descriptions about how to shoot up safely with injection drugs.

Be kind to your veins - A guide to caring for your veins while fixing in prison, where to shoot up, etc, put out by PASAN

Keeping fit - A prisoners guide to syringe care, cleaning your needles, and what to do to take better care of your body while shooting up in prison

L'injecteur - Un outil de promotion de la santé et de défense de droits fait « Par et Pour » les personnes qui consomment des drogues. Au-delà des thèmes relatifs aux infections transmissibles sexuellement et par le sang (ITSS) et aux drogues, l'Injecteur aborde d'autres sujets qui intéressent les personnes UDII, comme: la culture, le cinéma, l'art, l'histoire, la spiritualité, l'alimentation, le sexe, la santé etc.

Coming Out / LGBTQ Identity

African Americans Coming Out - A basic, non-prison specific guide to coming out for gay and lesbian African Americans

FTM International: the chest issue - The organizational and resource issue of the magazine FTM International, includes resource list for female-to-male trans folks.

Intro to intersex activism: a guide to gay, lesbian and bisexual allies - A short guide for people who are interested in knowing more about intersex identities and intersex activism

Out of the closets and into the libraries: a collection of radical queer moments - A 'zine put together archiving different moments in queer / gay history and snapshots of queer struggle (not prison specific)

Tim Tum, a trans jew zine - Concentrates on the struggle with being a transgender young man, issues of identity, and visibility among both queer and heterosexual groups. Highlights being a boy in Jewish American culture, and the struggle for identity when interfacing with normalizing power that attempts to gender you inappropriately.

Making he lives of transsexual people visible: Addressing the politics of social erasure - An examination of how social institutions and theoretical approaches have led to the erasure of transsexual (people who identify as members of the other gender) and transgendered (a broad term for a range of groups that do not fit into the current two-gender system) experiences and begins to counter this through developing research and a detailed analysis of the forms of marginalizaion and oppression facing transsexual and transgendered people.

Sex que(e)ry - Que(e)ry is a collaborative zine on queerness, sexuality & gender. It was made at the University of Chicago

Bent bars - from our sister org in the UK, a compilation of stories or coming out in prison

Getting Together - The ins and outs of dating & relationships for gay and bisexual men.

Bisexuality 101 - A great collection of articles compiled by PFLAG on history and on bisexuality and biphobia along with some answers to frequently asked questions.

How to be an Ally to a Bisexual Person — Bisexual Resource Center - A brochure of tips and conversation starters for bisexual people for talking to people about bisexuality with straight and gay people alike.

I Think I Might Be Bisexual, Fluid, Pansexual or Queer-Identified (So Now What?) — BiNet USA - An article about bisexual, fluid, pansexual, and queer experience, with quotes from bisexual people, safer sex tips, and thoughts on confronting biphobia.

LGBTQ Prison Literature

Building Bridges - A short article written by Lin Elliot in the mid 1990s that provides a brief overview of the realities of being queer in prison.

Prisons and Closets - An article written by Jason Lydon about his experience being in prison as queer, and about negotiating outness

Still We Rise: A Resource Packet for Transgender People in Prison (From the TGI Justice Project) - A comprehensive guide on access to medical care, information, and referrals.

Ultraviolet: The case of the jersey 4 - A small newspaper about the case of the new jersey 4 - four black lesbians who were convicted for defending themselves against a homophobic assault

A view from Treblinka Dungeon, Pelican Bay - An article written by Lofofora Contreraz about her time spent incarcerated at the SHU (Security Housing Unit) at Pelican Bay as a transsexual woman, and about communities of trans prisoners coming together to support one another in the face of torture.

Wiener Society - A gay punk zine put together by Neil, prisoner in the US, includes poetry, music reviews, etc.

Left Back: Issue 3 - Gay punk prisoner zine distributed by Fanorama; includes poetry and writing about prison life

Thoughts of my liberation: Issue 5- A zine put together by two-spirit Native American prisoner Iron Tipi Warrior about his experience of prison

Hormones

Hormones without a doctor - A comprehensive guide to street hormone use / hormone use without a doctor. Includes a pill and patch identification guide, what dosage to take pills, and other general tips about safe hormone use. Mostly MTF

Gender Anarky: a translesbigay 2 spirit zine" Issues March 2007 or December 2008 - A short zine put together by US transsexual prisoner about trans issues and hormone access in US and California prisons

TranzLezbos - A short zine, including poetry, for transsexual lesbians, put together by trans lesbian prisoner Lofofora, who is on the inside in California.

Hepatitis C and hormone therapy (Ausse disponible en francais) - A pamphlet about how you can transmit hepatitis C while injecting hormones (not specific to prisons)

MTF hormone therapy/traitement hormonal homme a femme - Some basic information about taking hormones for people who are thinking of transitioning male-to-female

FTM hormone therapy/traitement hormonal femme a homme - Some

basic information about taking hormones for people who are thinking of transitioning female-to-male

FAQ on transitioning/Questions frequemment posees sur la transition de genre - A basic guide that answers frequently asked questions about transitioning, hormone use, and gender transition

Tracing this body & new flesh struggles - An article about kink and radical politics written by a trans woman

Trans health information project: TIP Guide to hormones and self-injection

Smut

Penetration - A short story about fisting

Meatus: A pornzine for queers outside the box - A collection of erotic writing about gay bio men

Reversed Seduction - short erotic fiction by longtime correspondent and contributer premothea. A younger female inmate develops a plan to seduce her beautiful friend with a titillating surprise ending

Read me a story - new pieces by Promethea

FagPunk - a collection of sexual experiences of a gay boy that digs boots, bondage and mohawks.

Straight to Hell - one of the longest-running smut zines out there.

Women / Feminism

Pocket guide for women living with HIV (not prison specific) -A pocket guide for HIV-positive women that provides up-to-date information in plain language about a wide range of issues often faced by women with HIV. Topics include healthy living, nutrition, getting care, treatment basics, relationships and pregnancy. It also addresses street drugs and touches on hepatitis C co-infection. (by Positive Women's Network)

Corpus: volume 4 - Corpus, is an HIV prevention publication that brings together health information, politics, creative work, and essays all on issues related to HIV/AIDS, and where health and AIDS intersects with other other issues faced by gay and queer communities: incarceration, racism, policing.
Issue 4 is about women's relationships to gay men and AIDS;

Never Innocent: Feminist trouble with sex offender registries ans protection in a prison nation (by Erica R. Meiners) Using recent work by anti-prison theorists and community-based activists who are working against the prison industrial complex, this article links prison abolition to feminist frameworks to question escalating sex offender registries and community notification laws that are the state's response to sexual violence against children and women.

Tenacious: art and writings from women in prison

Women Prisoners' Resource Guide - a list of addresses and contact information for incarcerated women

One women's struggle - By Kebby Warner, a short zine about one women's struggle with te DOC, medical neglect, and about being a mother

Women in Prison: How It Is With Us - Author, Assata Shakur was a member of the Black Panther Party who went underground to evade police repression, joining the Black Liberation Army. She was captured in 1973 and held as a political prisoner until 1979 (one year after this article was written), when she was broken out of prison by a unit of the Black Liberation Army. She made her was to Cuba where she lives to this day, despite increasing pressure from the United States for her extradition.

Sex Work

Audacious: the reality of being a transsexual or transvestite sex worker/ Audace: etre transsexuelle ou travestie, c'est loin d'etre des droleries qui nous amusent a la tele dans la serie Cover Girl: - An article written by a member of the Prisoner Correspondence Project about her experiences as a transsexual sex worker dealing with the Montreal policing, court and prison systems.

Hey Girls! Safer sex for sex workers/ He les filles! Le securisexe pour les travailleuses du sexe

Write to us at:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
QPIRG-Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve O.
Montreal QC H3G 1M8
CANADA

New This Issue!

SAFER SEX

Women Lovin - Developed, designed and written by women: solid information on sexual health issues for queer women combined with practical tips and risk-reduction strategies. Only sent to women's prisons.

LIVING WITH HIV/HEP C

Hepatitis C: Managing Common Symptoms and Treatment Side Effects - for people living with Hep C

Hepatitis C: Get the Facts - all the info in plain language and detailed illustrations

Living with HIV and HepC Co-infection - offers key information on living with both viruses, covering useful topics such as HIV and hepatitis C basics, the effects of co-infection, ways to stay healthy, treatment strategies and preventing transmission.

Our Events

Hell No, We Won't Go: In Conversation with Laura Whitehorn - The transcription of an interview we conducted with former political prisoner Laura Whitehorn, on anti-prison organizing, HIV mobilizing, and being gay in prison.

Coming Out/LGBTQ Identity

Bisexuality 101 - A great collection of articles compiled by PFLAG on history and on bisexuality and biphobia along with some answers to frequently asked questions.

How to be an Ally to a Bisexual Person — Bisexual Resource Center - A brochure of tips and conversation starters for bisexual people for talking to people about bisexuality with straight and gay people alike.

I Think I Might Be Bisexual, Fluid, Pansexual or Queer-Identified (So Now What?) — BiNet USA — An article about bisexual, fluid, pansexual, and queer experience, with quotes from bisexual people, safer sex tips, and thoughts on confronting biphobia.

Smut

FagPunk - a collection of sexual experiences of a gay boy that digs boots, bondage and mohawks.

Straight to Hell - one of the longest-running smut zines around.

Resource Lists

****Updated** Prisoner resource guide:** a collection of organizations and services offered to prisoners(USA)

Here

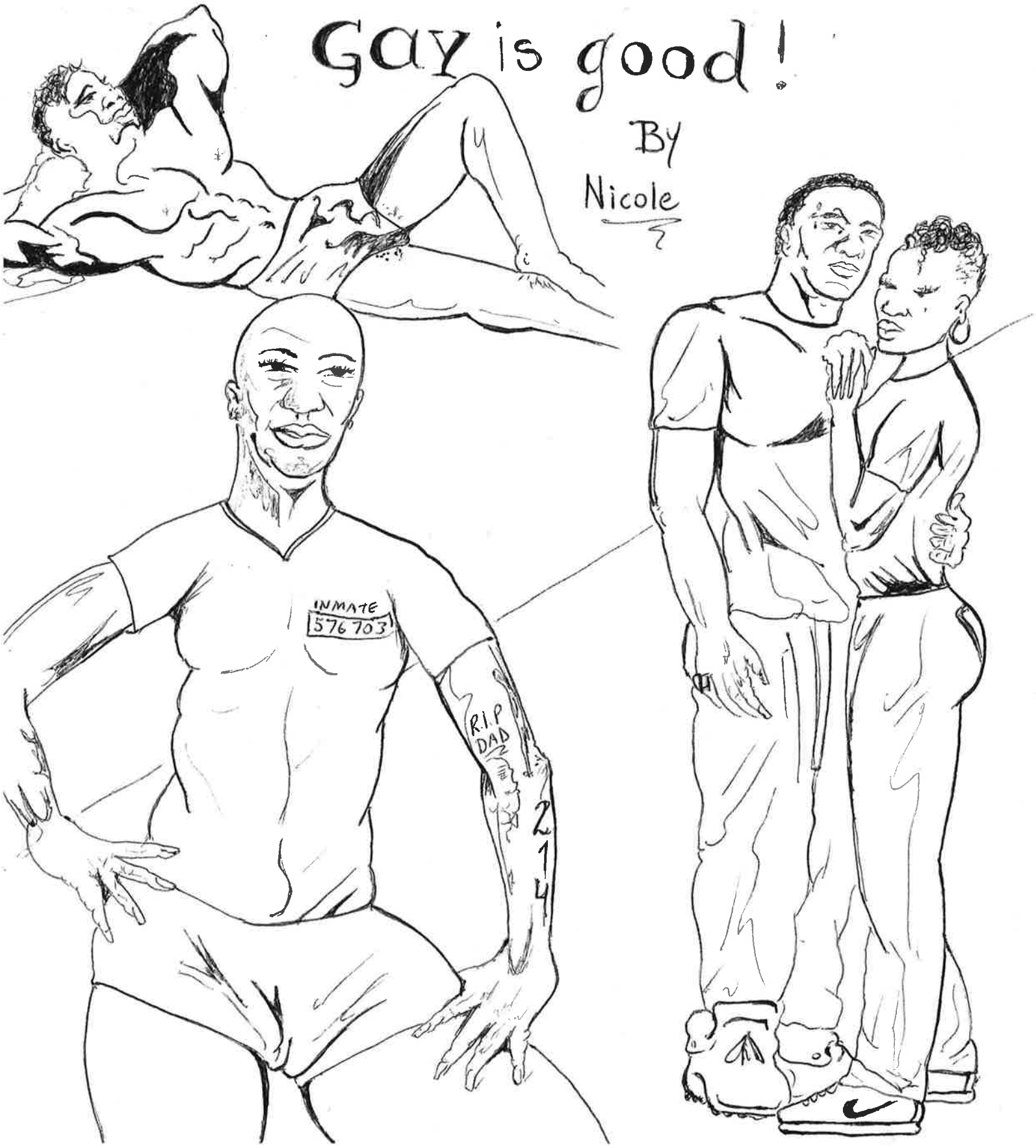
10-16-12

In Prison . . .

Gay is good!

By

Nicole



PRISONER CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT TRADITIONS & BELIEFS

By Rodney Rockhard

Personal change, social change, the birth and death of LGBT communities and organizations like the Prisoner Correspondence Project may always be traced to a series of personal demonstrations. For the inner self knows that the consistent application of a kept promise combined with healthy traditions and beliefs are the road out of the emotional prison in which so many incarcerated LGBT inmates have lived for so long, and in doing so have become comfortable living in.

However, through honest conviction, demonstration and by adopting the following traditions and beliefs, you learn the objectives, intentions and desires of the Prisoner Correspondence Project and thus begin to reach for your own full and actual potential as an incarcerated lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender inmate.

It was Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay on self reliance that said, "There comes a time in everyone's life that one arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance, imitation is suicide, that we must accept ourselves for better or for worse [as LGBT people]. That though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to us but through our toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to us to till. The power which resides in us [as LGBT people] is new in nature and none of us know what it is we can do until we have tried. Therefore bravely let us spear the utmost syllable of our conviction" and live by the traditions and beliefs set forth by the prisoner correspondence project.

1) The Prisoner Correspondence Project is the antidote to personal alienation. The way out is to let others in. You alone can do it, but you can not do it alone.

2) Develop authentic relationships in/out of prison based on personal authority, trust and demonstration. Learn to effect change without violence and build your personal self-esteem by accepting in your heart that your self worth as a LGBT person is priceless.

3) Always feel psychologically safe to express the reality of your personal experiences without fear, for as a LGBT people together we examine who we have been, who we are today and what our intentions are for tomorrow.

4) In the LGBT community nothing and no-one is secondary, everyone has something to teach and everyone in the LGBT community of incarceration has something to learn—we teach and learn everything from each other. Remain forever mindful that a learning LGBT person is alive and a learned person is dead. We cannot integrate what we have learned and are learning unless we can teach it. We can't keep it till we give it away.

5) Don't ask people to do things in the LGBT prison community that you yourself are not willing to do yourself.

6) When we refuse to judge others we begin to examine and discover who we really are ourselves, and because of such we learn to no longer exist behind the masks others want us to wear.

7) It is important to tell ourselves each and every day of our lives that despite my sexual orientation or gender identity, despite my place in life's history I as one of the LGBT community remain useful instead of useless, even if it's for the sake of simply being myself.

8) I will no longer live in the closet about who I am or who and what I desire. I refuse to live in the insecurities of others because I am lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. I have made the personal choice to remove all doubt about who I am and therefore have nothing to hide.

9) When we want for the LGBT incarcerated community what we want for ourselves, we naturally begin to make better choices and better decisions concerning the outcome of our future in as well as out of prison.

We might be in prison physically but with the Prisoner Correspondence Project by our side socially and mentally, we begin to move forward toward self-improvement, behavioral management and understanding, personal acceptance as it reflects our LGBT identity and the full and actual potential we truly deserve and desire. We learn to free ourselves even while in prison from the grip of a society that would rather enslave or deny or reject our existence. We begin to discover solutions that meet the needs of us all as a people. Let us continue to support the Prisoner Correspondence Project and all the hard work they do on our behalf, but more importantly let us love and support each other and above that ourselves for who we are.

With love & solidarity,
Rodney Rockhard

THE MAN BEHIND THE WORDS

Rodney Rockhard, born Rodney Wrice August 8, 1966 in St. Louis, MO, is an African American male who refuses to adhere to racial separation and divide. He stands 6 feet tall, weighs 190 lbs, slender build, dark complexion, sexy ball head and describes his passion for meeting new people and finding a life partner by saying "I can equally love a loyal, faithful and compassionate male to female transgender of any race with just as much conviction and commitment as any woman I have ever loved in the past." Rodney Rockhard as he is known is one of California's most engaged and involved LGBT prison activists. He has been unjustly sentenced and thus imprisoned for the past 25 years and counting. His commitment to the Prisoner Correspondence Project and the incarcerated LGBT community is endless. Rodney Rockhard is also the author of the soon-to-be-published book Switch Hitters Inside Prisons LGBT Community. If you want to show him some love, have a question or comment send it to us here at the Prisoner Correspondence Project.

THE LITTLE BRRL'S GUIDE TO STYLE

by Promethea

Well my little brrl. Some time you will have to do it. Your best friend will get married. Your cousin will have her mithak. Maybe you will get to go to a circumcision. But at some point you are going to have to dress and behave like you mean it. And that means following my simple guide to life and style.

I don't claim to have all of the answers. I do claim to have 90% of them though and that 90% comes down to this: If you, my little brrl, and i are going to be masculine then we need to make certain that we are not likely to mimic the absolute worst aspects of masculinity. And i am not talking about crotch grabbing here. I am talking about loving women without caring about what happens to them. Or treating them like whatever you do has more meaning. I am not talking about wearing a tie because Marlene Dietrich beat both women and men out in the sex appeal factor of that. I am talking about not being loathsome. I am talking about take all of the models of masculinity that you have been given and holding them up to hot icons and forging something new. Little Judy in the book "Female Masculinity" has a lot to say about masculinity if you are into this, but she also thinks a lot of herself too, and so far i haven't gotten past that to get into the heart of the book so anyhoo… here we go.

Here's the thing. Women probably were way more masculine at some point in history. When i think about paintings of feminine women on the walls in Roman homes pouring their little cisterns of olive oil gracefully i wonder if that wasn't some kind of campaign to show women how men thought they should be. What if all women started out as masculine and men stole it from us? What brand of masculinity would that be? The point is, don't be what you've just known, be what you are. Search a little bit. Try to discover masculinity beyond the roles you have seen played out over and over.

I have suffered a lot under this recently. I get offered when my coworker tells me she doesn't think i am masculine. When i ask why not she names the criteria I almost wretch. It sounds like a bare assed baboon i say. "What about a gay man? Am i masculine like a gay man?" She ponders because it sounds right but isn't sure. I think my new brand of woman or brrl might go through many kinds of evolutions but a few basic things will not change. And these, my brrl, are for you to cherish below.

Live a life worth living. Socrates or one of those dead white guys said "The unexamined life is not worth living." What he also should added was the unexamined impact of a life over impacting others is not worth living. Men get away with only having to think about themselves as usual. When they allot their time they have no problems allotting 95% of it to their interests figuring everyone else will fall into step with them. This is not the example you will follow. As i learned painfully from losing someone i seemed to only be aware of me as though i were stuck in some kind of myopic vacuum. Now that i have that part down i am learning part 2. Which is how to listen. So far i have failed at every attempt to do that well so we'll leave that for next time.

Style and the Brrl. If you want to wear men's clothing, please for all of us; wear it better than they do. The worst thing to happen to masculine dress was men. They have no style; they treat color like it was a disease. They are stuck in a monochromatic rut without it being even slightly ironic. Men do not deserve men's clothes. Take it from them, and wear it better than they do. I was stopped passing through some bourgie upscale four-star restaurant after a wedding by a man who wanted to know about the suit i had on. That's the kind of dress we want – dress that men envy and girls will do luscious and terrible things for.

Follow my simple step 1) Know what size you are in everything you wear before you go to were you shop. Find a woman at a men's clothing store to measure you. In general they are better at measurements than the boys. This way if you are not comfortable trying on men's clothing you will already know your inseams, and you can buy with confidence. And the plus is when some snotty nosed Docker wearing mismatched frat boy comes up to you to ask if you need help you can respond: "As a matter of fact you can!" Then you can watch his trap fold up and seal shut as he looks around to do your biddings. As a consolation i tell them they good in something they are wearing. It might be a stretch to think of something but give them a little lift too.

As far as trying your tie…well, this is the mark of individuality. I myself just figured out a new and wide tie knot that when seen from underneath the tie mimics the labial folds. I call it the "Joan of Arc" for distinction in public and the "cho-cho knot" in private. I wear my ties high, like fat blokes in the 40's. If you really want to know the "cho-cho knot" write me and i will teach it to you.

Step 2) for the thrift store how many pairs of pants have you bought from these stores that do not fit? It's because you need to know your measurements and carry a measuring tape with you. A couple of things you should know are what is worth taking to a tailor and what is not. Flee from anything that has shoulder pads. Flee from anything that looks cool but doesn't fit. Just because you like big Kelly green gingham check pant suits does not mean that they look good on you. I don't war what i like but i wear what shows respect to me and that i look like i'm wearing the clothes and they are not wearing me.

(If you do not like to wear ties and prefer to wear other kinds of male dress just keep in mind that men's clothes are really meant for us girls/women so that men can have a model to learn from so that they can stop dressing monkey-faced baboons. Remember we are twice the men they are.).

Food and Wine: There are a few basic things i think every human should really experience in this lifetime and one of them is an extraordinary meal savored with someone you care about. And barring that, the next best thing is to be able to make a dinner all for yourself after a shitty day that you eat in your panties and hog an entire bottle of wine while reading women's magazines. Never show up to anyone's house empty handed if you go out. It has been so long since i had more than my greedy appetite sautéed with extreme gratitude but in most cases that was enough. The point here is to have a bit of savvy about the way you live. Live well alone. Be ready to impress any gal/brrl/boy who asks you if you would like to go out for a glass of wine.

And my last piece of advice on this matter is to manage it well in case it gets ugly. Never, ever, ever, bad mouth a woman you dated to others in public or in private unless you are having a candid moment after 8 black Russians and you can't contain yourself. A brrl should never take advantage of anyone's state of mind, or their emotions in any way. This is a burden we sometimes share with other masculine mammals: baboons, monkeys, and men. We women need to look at how we inhabit shared space and check ourselves if we are dominating that space. We don't rabidly go after people in a moment of weakness to even the scales unless you are a man and "trying" to control me. In that case, i will emasculate ou and publicly humiliate you until you have a minus sperm count.

Sex. Little brrl's need love too, and though it might not sound masculine but here is where we get to steal a little selfishness from the boys the baboons. That means not taking pleasure not like it is unquestionably ours but that it is there for us to have if we can show up for it and make ourselves just as vulnerable, as we are asking our partner to be. And wow, does sex feel good. I mean they keep us wanting to do it, haven't you ever wondered why? Just go ask your girl, or someone you don't know but want to know what feels good about sex with you. Imagine feeling that with her. Oy, need i say more?

SO there is my first installment on the guide to being a supa savvy and smart little brrl. If i have missed any territory it is because i am tired of writing. There will be more as i figure it out. Or get my little butt slapped trying.

Touch me
Feel the difference brrls.

THE EROTIC AS POWER

by Promethea

There are many kinds of power, used and unused, acknowledged or otherwise. The erotic is a resource within each of us that lies in a male and spiritual plane, rooted in the power of our unexpressed or unrecognized feeling. In order to perpetuate itself, every oppression must corrupt those various sources of power within the culture of the oppressed that can provide energy for change. For women, this has meant a suppression of the erotic as a considered source of power and information within our lives.

We have been taught to suspect this resource, vilified, abused, devalued within society. On the one hand, the superficially erotic has been encouraged as a sign of female inferiority; on the other hand, women have been made to suffer and to feel both contemptible and suspect by virtue of its existence.

It is a short step form there to the false belief that only by the suppression of the erotic within our lives and consciousness can women be truly strong. But that strength is illusory, for it is fashioned within the context of male models of power.

As women, we have come to distrust that power which rises from our nonrational knowledge. We have been warned against it all our lives by the male world, which values this depth of feeling enough to keep women around in order to exercise it in the service of men, but which fears this same depth to much to examine the possibilities of it within themselves. So women are maintained at a distant position to be psychically milked, much the same way ants maintain colonies of aphids to provide a live-giving substance for their masters.

But the erotic offers a well of replenishing and provocative force to the woman who does not fear its revelation nor succumb to the belief that sensation is enough.

The erotic has often been misnamed by typical men and used against women. It has been made into the confused, the psychotic, sensation. For this reason, we have turned away from the exploration and consideration of the erotic as a source of power and information, confusing it with its opposite, the pornographic. But pornography is a direct denial of the power of the erotic, for it represents the suppression of true feeling. Pornography emphasizes sensation without feeling.

The erotic is a measure between the beginnings of our sense of self and the chaos of our strongest feelings. It is an internal sense of satisfaction to which, once we have experienced it, we know we can aspire. For having experienced the fullness of this depth of feeling and recognizing its power, in honor and self-respect we can require no less of ourselves.

It is never easy to demand the most from ourselves, from our lives, from our work. To encourage excellence is to g beyond the encouraged mediocrity of our society. But giving in to the fear of feeling and working to capacity is a luxury only the unintentional can afford, and the unintentional are those who do not wish to guide their own destinies.

This internal requirement toward excellence that we learn from the erotic must not be misconstrued as demanding the impossible from ourselves nor from others. Such a demand incapacitates everyone in the process. For the erotic is not a question only of what we do; it is a question of how acutely and fully we can feel in the doing. Once we know the extent to which we are capable of feeling that sense of satisfaction and completion we can then observe which of our various life endeavors bring us closest to that fullness.

The aim of each thing that we do is to make our lives and the lives of our children richer and more possible. Within the celebration of the erotic in all our endeavors, my work becomes a conscious decision - a longed-for bed which i enter gratefully and from which i rise up empowered.

II

Of course, women so empowered are dangerous. So we are taught to separate the erotic demand from most vital areas of our lives other than sex. And the lack of concern for the erotic root and satisfactions of our work us felt in our disaffection from o much of what we do. For instance, how often do we truly love our work even at its most difficult?

The principal horror of any system that defines the good in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, or that defines human need to the exclusion of the psychic and emotional components of that need - the principal horror of such a system is that it robs our work of its erotic value, its erotic power, and life appeal and fulfillment. Such a system reduces work to travesty of necessities, a duty by which we earn bread or oblivion for ourselves and those we love. But this is tantamount to blinding a painter and then telling her to improve her work, and to enjoy the act of painting. It is not only next to impossible, it is also profoundly cruel.

As women, we need to examine the ways in which our world can be truly different. I am speaking here of necessity for reassessing the quality of all the aspects of our lives and of our work, and of how we move toward and through them.

The ver word EROTIC comes from the Greek word EROS, the personification of love in all its aspects - born of Chaos, and personifying creative power and harmony. When i speak of the erotic, the, i speak of it as an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our lives.

There are frequent attempts to equate pornography and eroticism, two diametrically opposed uses of the sexual. Because of these attempts, it has become fashionable to separate the spiritual from the political, to see them as contradictory or antithetical. "What do you mean, a poetic revolutionary?" In the same way, we have attempted to separate the spiritual and the erotic, thereby reducing the spiritual to a world of flattened effect, a world of the ascetic who aspires to feel nothing. But nothing is further from the truth. For the ascetic position is one of the highest fear, the deepest immobility. The severe abstinence of the ascetic becomes the ruling obsession. And it is one not of self-discipline but of self-abnegation.

The dichotomy between the spiritual and the political is also false, resulting from an incomplete

attention to our erotic knowledge. For the bridge which connects them is formed by the erotic - the sensual - those physical, emotional, and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us, being shared: the passions of love, in its deepest meanings.

Beyond the superficial, the considered phrase, "It feels right to me," acknowledges the strength of the erotic into a true knowledge, for what that means is the first and most powerful guiding light toward any understanding. And understanding is a handmaiden that can only wait on, that knowledge. The erotic is the nurturer of all our deepest knowledge.

III

The erotic functions for me in several ways, and the first is in providing the power that comes from sharing deeply any pursuit with another person. The sharing of joy, whether physical, emotional, psychic, or intellectual, forms a bridge between the sharers that can be the basis for understanding much of what is not shared between them, and lessens the threat of their difference.

Another important way in which the erotic connection functions is the open and fearless underlining of my capacity for joy. In the way my body stretches to music and open into response, heartening to its deepest rhythms, so every level on which i sense also opens to the erotically satisfying experience, whether it is dancing, building a bookcase, writing a poem, examining an idea.

That self-connection shared is a measure of the joy that i know myself to be capable of feeling, a reminder of my capacity for feeling. And that deep and irreplaceable knowledge of my capacity for joy comes to demand from all of my life that it b lived within the knowledge that such satisfaction is possible, and does not have to be called marriage, nor religion, nor an afterlife.

This is one reason why the erotic is so feared and so often relegated to the bedroom alone, when it is recognized at all. For once we begin to feel all the aspects of our lives, we begin to demand from ourselves and from our life-pursuits that they feel in accordance with that joy which we know ourselves to be capable of. Our erotic knowledge empowers us, becomes a lens through which we scrutinize all aspects of our existence, forcing us to evaluate those aspects in terms of their relative meaning within our lives. And this is a responsibility, projected from within each of us, not to settle for the convenient, the shoddy, the conventionally expected, nor the merely safe.

I find the erotic such a kernel within myself. When released from its intense and constrained pellet, it flows through and colors my life with a kind of energy that heightens and sensitizes and strengthens all my experience.

IV

We have been raised to fear the YES within ourselves, tour deepest cravings. But, once recognized, those that do not enhance our future lose their power and can be altered. The fear of our desires keeps them suspect and indiscriminately powerful, for to suppress any truth is to give it strength beyond endurance. The fear that we cannot grow beyond whatever distortions we may find within ourselves keeps us docile and loyal, and leads us to accept many facets of our oppression as women.

When we live outside ourselves, and by that i mean an external directives only, rather than from our internal knowledge and needs, when we live away from those erotic guides from within ourselves, then our lives are limited by external and alien forms, and we conform to the needs of a structure that is not based on human need, let alone on an individual's. But when we begin to live from within outward, in touch with the power of the erotic within ourselves, and allow that power to inform and illuminate our actions on the world around us, then we begin to be responsible to ourselves in the deepest sense. For as we being satisfied with suffering and self-negation and the numbness that so often seems like their only alternative in our society. Our acts against oppression become integral with self, motivated and empowered from within.

In touch with the erotic, i become less willing to accept powerlessness, or those other supplied states of being which are not native to me, such as resignation, self-effacement, depression, self-denial.

And yes, there is a hierarchy. The is a difference between painting a back fence and writing a poem, but only one of quantity. And there is, for me, no difference between writing a good poem and moving into sunlight against the body of a woman i love.

This brings me to the last consideration of the erotic. To share the power of each other's feelings is different from using another's feelings as we would use a kleenex. When we look the other way from our experience, erotic or otherwise, we use, rather than share, the feelings of those others who participate in the experience with us. And use without consent of the used is abused.

In order to be utilized, our erotic feelings must be recognized. the need for sharing feeling is a human need. But within the european tradition, this need is satisfied by certain proscribed erotic comings - together. These occasions are almost always characterized by a simultaneous looking away, a pretense of calling them something else, whether a religion, a fit, mob violence, or even playing doctor. And this misnaming of the need and the deed gives rise to that distortion which results in pornography and obscenity - the abuse of feeling.

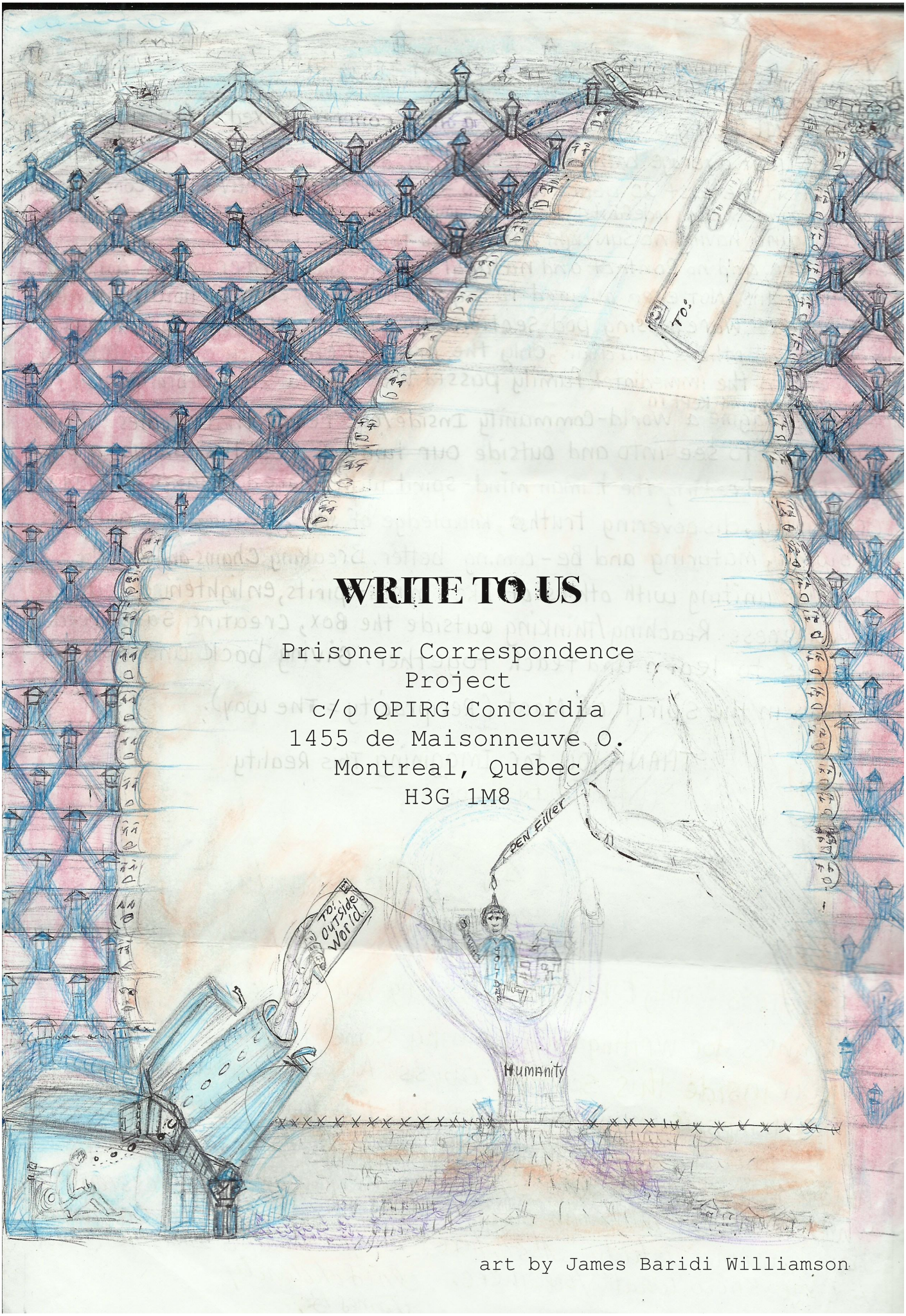
When we look away from the importance of the erotic in the development and sustenance of our power, or when we look away from ourselves as we satisfy our erotic needs in concert with others, we use each other as objects of satisfaction rather than share our joy in the satisfying, rather than make connection with our similarities and our differences. To refuse to be conscious of what we are feeling at any time, however comfortable that might seem, is to deny a large part of the experience and to allow ourselves to be reduced to the pornographic, the abused.

The erotic cannot be felt secondhand. As a Arab lesbian feminist, i have a particular feeling, and understanding for those sisters with whom i have danced hard, played. This deep participation has often been the forerunner for joint concerted actions not possible before.

But this erotic charge is not easily shared by women who continue to operate under an exclusively white male tradition. I know it was not available to me when i was trying to adapt my consciousness to this mode of living and sensation.

Only now, i find more and more women-identified women brave enough to risk sharing the erotic's electrical charge without having to look awaw and without distorting the enormously powerful and creative nature of that exchange. Recognizing the power of the erotic within our lives can give us the energy to pursue genuine change with our world, rather than merely settling for a shift of characters in the same weary drama.

For not only do we touch our most profoundly creative source, but we do that which is female and self-affirming in the face of a racist, patriarchal, and anti-erotic society.



WRITE TO US

Prisoner Correspondence
Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve O.
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 1M8

art by James Baridi Williamson