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POETRY ISSUE 2022



BANNER DROP AT CITY HALL DEMONSTRATING RESISTANCE TO THE MAYOR'S PLAN TO CLOSE SIP HOTELS DURING THE ONGOING COVID PANDEMIC

A DISTINCT LACK OF CHILL

The Paltry Sum: Detroit Richards November 9, 2021

A total lack of chill
Yet the room feels
As cold and empty
As space itself:
Vast and unyielding
A black hole soul
Defining the edges
Of what it means
To be
Afraid.

That is a cute hat. It hides your eyes and Shields your scorn Do the stars disappear Just because it is Morn? Does steel ever crack? Does the white bird fly? Are the ships upon the water? Is this a speck or a log That is in my eye? Do you like to write rhyme? Is what's yours really yours? Is what's mine safe or lost? Do you believe in freedom -Freedom at any cost? Can you ever walk back Across the bridge Of what has been given And has been given up? What would your mother say If you could see her? Would she say that It was worth The cost?

> And the infinity loop Expands Expands to envelop The soul And the numbers On your pillow Are the combination To the hole That is torn The hole that is rent In the substance And the marrow Of a world which Is bent Quite out of Shape As it is turning Out of time For any more Learning Out of room Out of space And the diamonds That are laced

Curtains and The veils Are spinning To no avail.

And all the mirrors
That are broken
And the promises
That are open
To interpretation
Are left lacking
In addition
To their cracking.

Enough.

Time is yearning For borders Keys are turning In locks that have been Fit But we cannot get Out of it. Mountains are Not made to go Around. The wall is Coming up Rising Out of the ground. All these petty sacrifices Made out of noise and sound Are too bourgeois to prevail, Too petty petty to lift the veil Too lacking and too dumb To ever move even the Thumb from which you struggle under.

You are lost, doomed,
Cast asunder.
There is no turning back
For you.
There is no way back to
What will, will be,
And who you used to be
To you, or to me
Or to any
Who have eyes
Which see.

I must say
You have
A distinct lack
Of chill
Yet are
The
Coldest
Thing
I have ever felt
This common side
Of

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CONTACT:

QWATTS@COHSF.ORG

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agendas to us.

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

Editor, Quiver Watts (they/them) Assistant Editor, TJ Johnston Vendor Coordinator, Emmett House

Coalition on Homelessness staff also includes Jennifer Friedenbach, Jason Law, Olivia Glowacki, Miguel Carrera, Tracey Mixon, Carlos Wadkins, Kelley Cutler, Tyler Kyser, Ian James, Yessica Hernandez, Solange Cuba

Our contributors in this issue include: Jesse Mentken, Johanna Elattar, Simone Manganelli, Alastair Boone, Jordan Davis, Paul Boden and Western Regional Advocacy Project

CONTRIBUTE TO STREET SHEET!

We are always looking for new writers, photographers, poets, artists to help us spread the word on the street! Share stories about your experiences of homelessness in San Francisco, about policies you think the City should put in place or change, your opinion on local issues, or about something newsworthy happening in your neighborhood!

PROMPT: What would you do on your first day as Mayor of San Francisco?

SUBMISSIONS: You can email your work to qwatts@cohsf.org or submit in person or by mail at the Coalition on Homelessness at 280 Turk Street, San Francisco CA 94102. Paid opportunities may be available to contributors who are experiencing homelessness. Ask the editor to find out



JUSTICE

Waverly Walton

Justice is hard to find Can't we just get along?

Stop the violence of every race let love take its place.
We should not have to be afraid of our justice system.

We should all be judged fairly.
Life is too short to get this type of
Response, there has to be fair
Justice for everyone, Black,
White, yellow, or Blue,
We are ask for fair Justice
For you

Can't we just get along?
We are a family and the city is our home.
Can the police stop picking on the poor
And try to open up other doors?
This would be a better city
Than it ever was before.

Can the Judge judge us fairly
On the color of our Skin.
Not for the money we don't have.
Because injustice is a sin, which
God don't love, and he's everyone's
Friend.

Give every color justice. And don't just put the poor Behind the closed door.

Can't we just get along
Justice

Thank you Waverly Walton

What's the Deal?

Aaone Enosa

What is it that you're feeling
Do you want me or you don't?
All this beating around the bush...need to stop and let me know.

I'm too old for these games and I'm wasting my precious time; Life's too short to be playing games with my mind. You're hanging on a thread with me I would say

My heart of gold deserves to make it to second base. I'm outgrowing your mentality that's inconsiderate and stuck, Long as we're on the same page, there's no we or no us.

You don't prioritize me as important in your life
I'm contemplating hard whether to be your wedded wife.
I need someone who knows how to balance life and respects,
Who reciprocates fairly, leaving one without regret.
I need a strong man that's humble and honest.
Who loves me unconditionally and treats me with respective modest.

So, do you want me or not? Seriously, I need to know. I will be an asset not a liability with hard work it will show. Things will work out for the better I believe, the power of prayer to heal And asking anything I'll receive!

I am strong enough to take whatever answer you decide.

The sooner you give me an answer the sooner I start a new life.

I, Aaone Siapai Enosa, am a recovering alcoholic and addict at Crestwood Champion Healing Center. I've been here since July 8th, 2021. My program has 3 phases. First is The Willows which is acute care, 2nd is Cypress which is low level care, and The Oaks which is independent living. I am now in the Oaks. I love it here. I found my passion and discovered my gift of writing poems. I never thought I'd like writing before.

When I'm lost in my thoughts, words easily come to me. What inspired me to write poems for the hardworking staff was because I could see the effort they put in to help me recover. I am blessed to have met them. Each and every one is unique in their own way. But, one thing they have in common is that they all want the best for me. I believe the Lord put them in my life for a reason. They really do care and love.

I came here with the willpower to change. At this moment, I have the desire to make a difference. I am the President: pulling my peers up, encouraging them to go to groups, do their hygiene, socializing with them, advocating for them, be their role model., a liaison, treat them fairly and with respect, and have no expectations. I am loved by this beautiful facility.

THIS WINTER SEASON.. GIVE THE GIFT OF HOME

This year alone, our work resulted in...



- 3,000 homeless households becoming housed
- Over 2,000 extremely vulnerable folks experiencing homelessness to have a shelter in place hotel
- AND LOTS MORE!

VISIT COHSF.ORG OR SCAN TO DONATE



SCAN ME

Coalition on Homelessness

"STATE. FORCED. PREGNANCY." art and poetry by Revolt

Where do men get off telling women what they can do with their *body*? Where do men get off telling trans and genderqueer people what they can do

Where do men get off? At the next stop please!

we got no need for your authoritarian fetus fetishization your quasi fake as fuck demonstration supporting

State. Forced. Pregnancy.

State. Forced. Pregnancy.

is what this is all about

twelve year old girl finding out her stomache grows to bring life close losing compose-r teased in geomtry classes for a demon seed father planted

where did she give consent?

when State. Forced. Pregnancy.

is what the GOP represents...

228 lawmakers from the Senate and the House lecherous scum pushing a bill right now to execute with their executive powers

unspeakable crimes to force women into back alleys with coat hangers blood, tears, and cries...

gaslit manipulated hypocrits with picket sign fraud misuse feminist words or leverage the voice of a God rabidly frantic to take on a cause laced with po-lit-i-cal agendas to keep the people at odds

anti-life demonstration denies a woman's right to choose bible belt Christianists supporting sexual abuse claiming "pro life" taglines when they dont do shit for refugees attacked by drone bots in airplanes with American flags

Palestinian children shot apart by Israeli rifles is unimportant says FoxNewsMax pundits they value more the so-called "life" of a fetus in a white woman's

an unborn glob they debate with philosophical semantics word salad antics horror porn posters on freeway overpasses means so drastic to protect at all costs what's inside the white woman's stomach an *Aryan* embryo that can't be lost

stomache

Universal childcare? paid time off? No. for any mother that gives birth it's right back to the job backbreaking sweat paid less fighting the odds for the same exact work that I get? fuck. off.

you misogynist hypocrit pigs you're about as "pro-life" as Dick Cheney with 3 beers in him on a hunting trip.

Your white supremacist agenda isn't fooling me in the least

you're the first to sterilize black women against their will that's your motto-I mean, you're the first to sterilize disabled mothers to be if my crippled ass wanted a kid you wouldn't help me in the least! but if it's a white woman's stomach you'll fight to the *death* 1st degree...

murders and crimes you commit with your bat shit philosophies that provoke white wing terrorists with six feet of rope Here's a brief list of the victims you attacked spreading hate and fear

State. Forced. Pregnancy.

George Tiller, woman's health care provider, murdered. June Barnett, and her husband, woman's health care provider murdered. Calvin Jackson, woman's health care provider was stabbed 15 times David Gandell, women's health care provider attacked by a sniper in his apartment Emily Lyons, women's health care provider lost her eye in a bombing that murdered sounds like pro-life to me!

- wait -

get the fuck off at the. next. stop. we don't need your policing people's bodies at all 13,000 homeless Americans die each year, who you don't care about at all

Go volunteer with a soup serving or join the Red Cross

instead of demonizing women's choices with State. accosting young women and teens abused at the hands of men who look a lot like you, who act a lot like youwith the same agendas and trends...

you set clinics on fire, you bomb people's homes and stab doctors in the back you're about as pro-life as a Sopranos rerun on HBO Max

we won't put up with your attacks and WE WONT GO BACK!

State. Forced. Pregnancy.

don't. even. ask.



ACROSS FROM THE POPULAR PARK WITH PALMS

your elders will dream dreams
Acts 2:17

On the sidewalk near the intersection across from the popular park with palms

an aged man pushing a shopping cart piled high with bottles and with cans and four large

garbage bags stuffed full hanging off the sides. He plods, his head of white hair hung over his

shrunken self as if his neck were broken, back humped, his arms outstretched; he leans into

the discarded weight. Reaching the curb he does not cross on Dolores to the park

with palms but stops, bows his head to the cart's hard handle: a surrendering in prayer?

A flock of lorikeets swoop, screech, and land.

Old leaf scars form a pattern—
blessings crowned.

BY THE BUS STOP

Poems by Virginia Barrett She sells flores | Flowers by the bus stop | La gente |
La basura | Walgreens is always open | All flores five
bucks | Her face is an umber daisy | Bus stop | People |
Garbage | Flowers son preciosas | Cinco dólares | She
sells flores | Flowers | Flores | How fast the cherry
blossoms came and left | Her flowers | Flores | Flowers
by the bus stop in their cut bouquets | She had to leave
her children behind | She remembers all the flores in
the market with her mother when she was small | Muy
lejos | El mercado they walked to arm in arm |
Chickens and mangoes and shoes | Abajo | The Earth is
round | A daisy disk | Cactus on the border in bloom |
The brick wall of Walgreens | People | La basura | Que
sonrisa | Her big white bucket is stained |

THE KINSHIP OF NEIGHBORS

Jonah Raskin

Homeless I am not, nor am I a Republican or a Democrat, though I've been woke since shortly after I came into this world & knew I was different from the Others who lived in big houses & whose parents drove big cars, believed in Bigness, didn't see the folks who lived under the sun & the stars, & in broken down houses behind Main Street, an invisible presence my hometown wanted to pretend didn't exist, wasn't a part of the bleached nation born of chattel slavery, that at this late date doesn't want to acknowledge that we all belong to the Family of Humans who came down from the trees, lived in caves, learned to harness fire, built pyramids, believed in an end to bondage & the kinship of neighbors inside & outside four walls with light, heat & all that shit.

HUNGRY BABIES ON EARTH

hearin babies screaming in the nite from hunger an fright

knowin many will die before the mornin light

oh lord please help me find a way to feed every starving baby on earth

my heart is yours in anyway you need

i have nothing to give but the love pouring in me from above

if it be thy will please help me oh lord find a way to feed every hungry baby on earth

hearin babies screaming in the nite from hunger an fright

HOMELESS ARE SAINTS

the homeless
living an dying
on our streets
as we walk by
pretending not to see
as they eat
out of garbage cans
an die alone
in cold dark nites

the homeless are the nameless saints who were created to do great things like you and I

an they need food shelter and medical care as we all do to survive

the homeless are saints having to watch as we walk by not caring if they live to see the morning lite

the homeless are saints

Poems by Judy Joy Jones

Poems by Sam "Palos" Kraemer

untitled

There are worse feelings than misery
There is worse hurt than pain
There an exhaustion beyond being tired
When I pass let me not be resurrected
But let me sleep a dreamless sleep
Afloat in the void
Lost in the black

Crickets

Fingers touch flesh and fingers touch strings
Muscles ache and bacon sizzles
I am stoned in the middle of the art museum
The crunch of crickets in the hot night air
Stepping branch to branch and talking to strangers

COLLECTION DAY

Virginia Barett

We are feeling the universe with giant gloves which grow each night covering

the cosmos, as one covers their face when caught by surprise or an overwhelming

grief. Cloud-shadows move and don't move; walking trees make their way

closer to stars while we sleep, draped on limbs. From the window I watch

a woman wheel a dog in a carriage on the sidewalk as a man pushes a shopping

cart down the middle of the dead end street. She's shouting at him across the space between them, over the rattle of the metal

cart piled with plastic garbage bags full of empties. They vanish from view, become

barely audible: gone. I put on my mask and go outside. After collection, blue recycling bins stand like bodies gathered

for an action yet to begin. I breathe through the tight weave, watch light salvage

wreckage from the sun; I am too seldom at the ocean to hear the murmuring of shells.

SOMETIMES IN WINTER

She wears
Broken promises,
On a string necklace
Around her neck

Worn and frazzled, Its bloody knots Cut into her skin.

Touching each promise, Believing every lie She's a phantom On a foggy winter night.

> Poems by © 2021 Johanna Elattar

THIS HOUSE IS HAUNTED

In darkness, they dwell, Consumed by madness, And relentless need.

Long dead spirits, Still searching for rest, Death, so unkind, never took them.

This house is haunted, Haunted by cruel games, Endless, and, unwinnable.

Words that turn to Silent screams, hang in The frigid air, unheard.

Youth, its blush Long faded, Was it ever there?

Long shadows stumble, Like birds blinded by an Unforgiving sun.

On a broken street, Invisible, it remains. This house is haunted.

gender bender

© 2020

I've become what you fear the most a big bad wolf standing outside your house of cards the binary that binds you like constipation or a straightjacket I'm not an enigma I'm an oracle only it's not deities I converse with I'm as ancient as language as mystic as music you think I'm an abomination but I'm the mosquito buzzing in your ear the dream you pretend you don't remember the rose you won't let open

Poems by Tommi Avicolli Mecca

cop kicking a homeless man

© 2018

the cop kicked him he kicked a homeless man sleeping on the cold cement no blanket no shopping cart no bags nothing but the clothes on his back a half empty water bottle and a styrofoam take out carrier with noodles the cop's partner stood beside him looking bored as she checked her phone the drinkers drank in the nearby bar their laughter spilled out onto the street the people crossing the intersection never glanced at the cop kicking a homeless man who jumped up and raced for the train that had just pulled up door shutting behind him it being Veterans Day I had to wonder if the man the homeless man was a vet not that it would matter to a cop who kicked a man a homeless man to wake him up

from his cold cement bed

nothing but the clothes

no blanket

on his back

no shopping cart

I HELP BUILD SAN FRANCISCO

Marcella Ortiz

I helped built this building inside families from different states, prey on a Mahogany dinner table give thanks for all they have

I helped built this building outside the cement continues to shed its bubble gum layers tents pitched on corners inside them families from San Francisco prey and give thanks for all they have

I helped built this building in 2019 my first job as a journeyman pulled all the electrical in-between the double layer rock that was hung to keep the noise of the street out

The noise of the outside cars, busses, street cleaners cleaning the streets families walking along the dead grey, sometimes black city slabs

I helped built this building inside lights up beautifully beautifully with there vintage Edison lamps that take and take all the energy outside a family clicks off the 5.99 LED lantern from REI kisses children goodnight

I help build San Francisco wish my next job was something that brought me pride



HOME

I thought HOME was family I thought HOME was where I lived I thought HOME was only blood But it's not.

Home is where you and your partner talk about marriage
Arguing over nothing but then cuddling 5 minutes later
It's where your dog and cat snuggle in your lap from time to time
And interrupt the "alone time" you rarely get with your partner
Home is where you can let loose and act crazy
Singing from the top of your lungs even if it can get annoying
It's where you feel safe and secure and loved
Home is running around while chasing a naked toddler
Tripping over his toys while rewatching Bluey a million times over
Or continuing to tell a 7-year old to do her homework
As she makes up excuses and continuously jumps in your lap
Needing to sneak out because they give puppy dog eyes every time you leave
And it's talking nonsense with your best friend,

having a dirty mind and trying to go through with some very subtle pranks Home has a guinea pig named after our favorite character which was named by the 2-year old

BABY YODA

Defining home is difficult Everyone thinks differently But to me,

It's my Chosen family

Those who have been there no matter what

My home is a wild but safe place

My home isn't a where but a who

My home is my family and friends

The old and the new

From my brother, sister, and dad

To My best friends. Niece and Nephew,

To my love and our new founded family

They are my HOME

Leilani Sabugo Bio: Leilani Sabugo is a 21-year old female, born and raised in San Francisco. She is a poet and college student majoring in Child Development. Leilani works with the Sunset Neighborhood Beacon Center and is passionate about working with youth. In her spare time, she writes and performs original poetry that expresses her thoughts and feelings. Leilani has performed her poetry at the Tenderloin Museum's Annual Community Celebration, Larkin Street Academy's Annual Education Graduation, Larkin Street Art Program's Performing Arts Night and had her work highlighted in Larkin Street Art Program's San Francisco Public Library art exhibit.

IAM...

I am a human being. I make mistakes. I laugh. I cry. I get angry. I forget things. But, these all make me human. I'm not a robot. But, some people expect me to be robot-like. Able to easily turn my emotions on and off like a switch. But, it's not that easy. Eventually, human-like robots develop feelings. Eventually, they malfunction. Eventually, they develop their consciousness to see that what they were taught to do was wrong. I guess they become sentient that way. I guess I am a sentient robot in a weird way. It explains my rebellious nature of life. Because of this robotlike upbringing, I was seen as a weird, antisocial, teacher's pet and when I was an adult, I was seen as strong, nonchalant, a pushover, easy, unapproachable. But, that wasn't the case at all. I was taught to act like that. I was taught to dress like that. I was taught to BE like that. After I moved out of my parents house, that's when I realized that all of that was a mask—it wasn't me. I was never boring. I am actually quite entertaining. I was never what people expected of me. I was just myself.

HOME

My community is as tightly knitted together like a comfy sweater, as the many threads create a beautiful project together. It emits the smell of cotton candy, the smell of fun and friendships. The way the many silky strands of sweet sugar forms into a deliciously sweet treat reminds me of my community. Community to me resembles a second family to me, but also a group that I know when I am around them, I feel safe.

My neighborhood is diverse. My neighborhood is creative. My neighborhood is loud yet comforting. I think about the Starbucks that I used to work at-right before the Stockton tunnel that leads to Chinatown. I think about the 38 bus line- the bus I constantly took from Inner Richmond district to Union Square. I think about the places that I used to go to when I stayed at Geary House: the Shai-Lai Seafood Restaurant where I got my favorite egg white fried rice, Bambu, where I got Mangonadas from that were always bomb, Sanppo Restaurant in Japantown where I always get my favorite Japanese rice dish, and lastly the places that I shop at: Safeway, Target, and Grocery Outlet. This was my neighbrohood back in 2019, but I'll always visit it.

My home now is closer to Golden Gate Park, the greenery just a block away. I smell the lavender scented wax that greets me as soon as I enter my room- my safe space. The place where I can sit and revive myself from the busy day of being social. The N Muni Line that I take to and from work is part of my routine, and the comfort of music in my ears as I listen to music wherever I go in my headphones. It's vivid as I'm greeted with fresh air and serenity as I leave and come back from work. My home is not perfect, of course, with it's cracks in the wall, the heavy windows in my room, and the lack of elevators since I live in an old house, but... I see the positivity in these things. I walk up and down the stairs without any complaint. I cover the cracks with colorful posters and decorations. I prop my windows open whenever it gets too hot. I made my home into a home just for me. And that is all that matters.

Cierra Murray Bio: Cierra Murray, formally known as "SHIN", is an artist born in Hollywood, Florida that currently resides in San Francisco. She uses a blend of word play in the form of rap, R&B, and K-pop inspiration to create a uniquely addictive sound that she can only describe as the spice in Shin Ramyun.

HOPES - WHAT YEAR IS IT?

Without a house, I could be.

The wind blows through my clothes at night.

My feet are cold, so are my hands.

I tell people passing bye
"I am just feeding the pigeons."

"You shouldn't be in the cold, on the street" but I am.

My stomach rumbles.
Lucky to eat last night.
My body remembers more than me.

Shoppers pass by the mural of the dead at Union Square.

They stand in my way,
I want to remember them.

-anonymous-

BASIC NEEDS

Hugs

How can I unwind in a city full of crime?

Full of drug od's and racist police

In a city where housing is a prize even if you work a 9-5

How can I get by?

How can the youth in this city get ahead, without dropping dead from exhaustion? Because our jobs abuse us, our bosses refuse us basic needs...like A DAY OFF PLEASE??

It's not a life when you cry all night cuz PG&E sent you a late fee

And now you have no electricity

It's not a life when all you do is work.

Basic Needs.

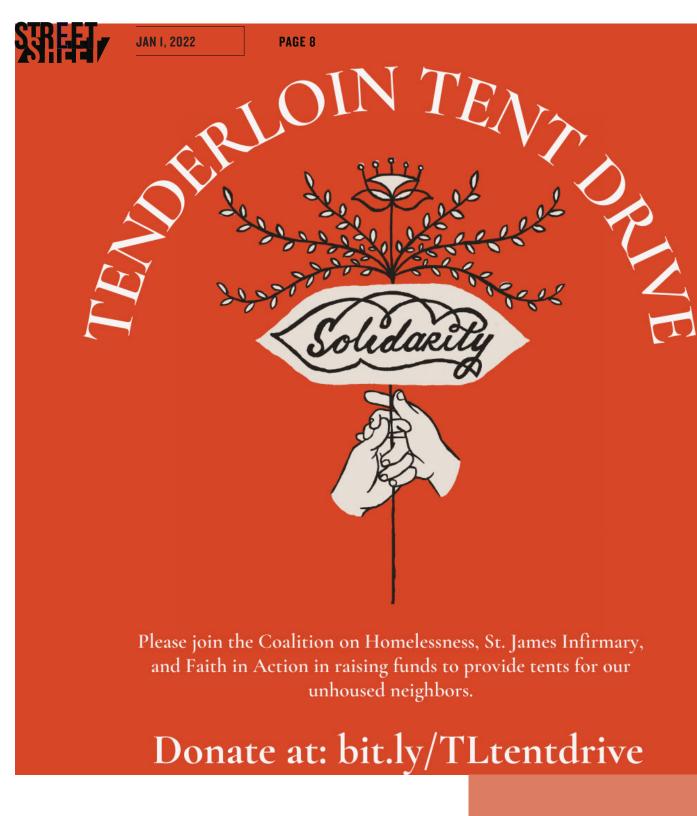
But I guess they're not so basic

If we have to climb 10 trees and cross 5 deserts to get those "basic needs"

I guess having healthy food, shelter and clean water is a privilege many don't get to see Yes of course it's unfair, I see it everyday

Walking through the Tenderloin, the Haight and all over the Bay

But try to smile
Cuz at the end of the day
Nothing lasts forever
And those bills you never paid
Will eventually
Fade
Away



TENDERLOIN TENT DRIVE:

Our unhoused neighbors need your support this winter!

Please donate to our mutual aid drive to offer tents, sleeping bags and tarps to our unhoused, unsheltered neighbors in the Tenderloin. A \$40 donation provides a 2-person tent, offering people basic shelter from the elements this winter.



and how we can practice harm Foundation—about what the overdose crisis is, the disparate impact Fairburn—a harm reduction worker at the San Francisco AIDs deaths during the same period. We speak with Ashley

Franciscans in 2020—twice the number of COVID-19

The overdose crisis claimed the liv

AND WHY SHOULD I CARRY

EPISODE 10: WHAT IS THE OVE

Homelessness San Francisco

Coalition

es of 700 San

Learn more!

communities.

reduction in our own

it has on homeless San Franciscans,

keep people who use drugs safe. https://www.sfaf.org/ The San Francisco AIDs Foundation has so much helpful information isis and many programs to help about the overdose cri

Support for Street Speak comes from our listeners! s online at https://coalition. networkforgood.com Please donate to u

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94188 PERMIT NO. 3481

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Coalition On Homelessness

San Francisco, CA 94102

280 Turk Street