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STREET SHEET IS READER SUPPORTED, ADVERTISING FREE, AND AIDS TO LIFT UP THE VOICES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY IN SAN FRANCISCO.
I was shocked, confused, bewildered, As I entered Heavens door, Not by the beauty of it all, Nor the lights or its décor. But was the folks in heaven, Who made me sputter and gasp, The thieves, the liars, the sinners, The alcoholics and the trash. There stood the kid from seventh grade, Who swiped my lunch money twice, Next to him was my old neighbor, Who never said anything nice. Herb, who I always thought, Was rotting away in hell, Was sitting pretty on cloud nine, Looking incredibly well. I nudged Jesus, “What’s t the deal? I would love to hear your take, How’d all these sinners get up here? God must’ve made a mistake. ‘And why’s everyone so quiet, So sombre – give me a clue.’ ‘Hush, child,’ He said, ‘they’re all in shock, No one thought they’d be seeing you.’

JUDGE NOT

Remember, just going to church doesn’t make you a Christian any more than standing in your front yard makes you a car.

Every saint has a future!
What Christmas Means to Me

Waverly Walton

I recently moved. It’s a tiny studio, but in a nice neighborhood with good and kind people, the kind of people that make this dreary world livable. My mom was like that—she would have loved this neighborhood!

My mom died last year at the age of 76. We both thought she would live to be 100. I never did get around to watching “A Christmas Carol” with her, and I really regret that.

When she reached her 50s she just gave up. I’m 53, and I sort of feel the same. I’m gonna give this roller coaster ride just a few more tries before I get off. And I think I’m feeling the same about Christmas. But I have a home now. I can’t even imagine being homeless on Christmas in this city!

Many of us have given up on Christmas. Just another dream sold to the naive, like me.

I think I’m gonna start a new tradition. Every Christmas I’m going to write an article about my thoughts on Christmas. Maybe one day that article won’t be a sad one.

This Christmas is different for me. It’s sad, it’s lonely, and it’s isolating.

I’ve never experienced romantic love. Every try has been a painful disaster. This time of year is really hard for that reason as well. I’m one of those hopeless romantics you hear so much about. My mom and I also had that in common—really nice women who are constantly being hurt.

Heard in the back of the bus a very fine young man with fine cornrows was asking me where he could go here in San Francisco.

In Oakland all the shelters are full and here you play the lottery to get in he’s destined for the street for sure.

He has a bag of peanuts in their shells circling peanuts riding in the back of the night bus in a lonely carousel.

Who is sung in their peanut shell?

A love poem to all of my supporters.

Thank you.

Much love

Waverly

The Commute

[San Francisco to Half Moon Bay]

Virginia Barrett

Hawk in a dead tree overlooking a field where horses graze. Yesterday, a mattress dumped on the sidewalk in front of my building; restless sleep with so much rain. My neighbor upstairs leaves at four this morning—a guy who usually sleeps past noon. The engine of his vintage van whirls under my window, waking me. My drive begins near sunrise. An opposite commute they say but still, the creeping numbness of it. What comes into view day after day we begin to hold dear—random milestones of existence—a neon cafe sign blinking: OPEN. Like mala beads, I’ve come to count on the hawk and horses. Sometimes I find no raptor, but a tiny sparrow for prayer.

In tribute to Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1919-2021), San Francisco’s first poet laureate. This poem was inspired by Ferlinghetti’s poem, “Allen Ginsberg Dying.”

Lawrence Ferlinghetti has died. It’s all over the internet. It streams through social media feeds. A great being has died. But his work won’t die.

His work is in our island minds. It’s in our useful musings. In North Beach in his own bed he died. There is no way to change it. He died the death all life dies. He died the death of a poet, of an artist, publisher, insurgent extraordinaire.

For a century his bright eyes saw what the sky sees. What the ocean brings. Blind in his last years he listened as humanity heaves under the weight of greed & need and left poems for us all.

Through the cycles in the wheel of the world there is only one Ferlinghetti. The lover Death has enchanted him where once he drew her nakedness with live open strokes. And stood among the flesh remains at Nagasaki a newborn poet-pacificist.

He has passed beyond the Golden Gate. His painted vessel out of sight becoming pure light. He has taken off his Lady Liberty mask he was the infinite one the face of all expression.

Lawrence is on the big screen now playing in the Poetry Room. He climbed the stairs a final time his office door an OPEN DOOR. His voice is in the air it fills City Lights everywhere. His breath is in the books between each line and word.

And we hear his new manifesto the sea weeps in it the birds sing in it. Dissidents no longer hide. It is high tide and the seabirds cry. The water has washed over him here by the bay in San Francisco.

Where a migrating whale comes early this year to weep in the sea to sing in the sea. A deep sonar song sounding through us Lawrence they call Lawrence.

His work is in our island minds. It streams through social media feeds. A great being has died. But his work won’t die.

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In tribute to Lawrence Ferlinghetti (1919-2021), San Francisco’s first poet laureate. This poem was inspired by Ferlinghetti’s poem, “Allen Ginsberg Dying.”

The other tradition? My mom watched “A Christmas Carol.” She kept trying to get me to watch it with her, but I never did. It just seemed boring. I sort of feel the same as well. I’m gonna give this roller coaster ride just a few more tries before I get off. And I think I’m feeling the same about Christmas. But I have a home now. I can’t even imagine being homeless on Christmas in this city!

Many of us have given up on Christmas. Just another dream sold to the naive, like me.

I think I’m gonna start a new tradition. Every Christmas I’m going to write an article about my thoughts on Christmas. Maybe one day that article won’t be a sad one.
WE RESIST

Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Being surrounded by cars
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Aggressors dressed the same
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
The sight of their guns
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Harassment @ 1st sight
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Being punked into surrendering
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
The bark of their guns
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Falling dead on concrete
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Being driven to the morgue
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Being planted in the boneyard
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Watching families grieve
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Watching many tears fall
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Any more community deaths
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Any more night rides on Blacks
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Because it serves us to preserve us
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Because our lives count, any amount
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
On a special day
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Every October 22nd
Wear black

Fight back
We resist
Beyond this 1 day
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
The stereotypical criminal profile
Wear black
Fight back
We resist
Brutality from the police—
W: 10.22.22

MONITOR

Light shined on my path
Radiating from one
Black Dell©
Laptop computer monitor.
Curiosity took hold
Of my fingers,
Tapping the keyboard,
Hand on mouse,
Following the light’s source.

Meeting I.D.
And then
Passcode
And then
White waiting room
And then
The light
I sought,
Manifested as
40 poets
Inside squares
On screen.
My element,
My people,
My audience.

I adore
This light
I discovered.
The light
Adores me in return.
With each
Line I exhale,
Stanza I spit,
Into the monitor,
Into the Zoom© room.
Claps, snaps & emoticons.
W: 11.9.22

Only a coward
Attacks people
Loving differently
Only a coward
Insecure in himself
Loads an ammo belt and straps an assault rifle
To his person
Only a Coward
To be certain
Lacking the last straw of common sense
Disregards freedom and all it meant
To sacrifice the innocent
And spill the blood
Of a community
That thrives on tolerance
Only a Coward
Immortalized in another headline
Another mass grave
Infamous for a pointless crime of terror
A Coward
afraid of change
Only a coward
Marks off the crime scene
Hides behind a PR desk
The press ask for a statement
He’d make
Only a coward funded to protect
Wont say yet
If the crime was motivated by hate
Only a Coward
Denies the obvious
To gaslight and perpetuate
The abuses they oversee
The news
Hoping to spin a headline
So they wont need to support
People
LGBTQ
Plus
Disgusted with
Myself for feeling numb
By so Many Cowards
With itchy trigger fingers and thumbs
Playing Call of Duty
Like it was Call of the Reich
Splitting torsos, limbs with artillery
In plain sight
Our backyards and playgrounds
Soaked in the blood of our friends
Only a Coward
Enlists terror
Against those that serve no threat to him
Only the Brave
Stay their resolve
Against a genocidal machine
WE RESIST

Dee Allen
Nothing gets me hornier fast
then to see your fine ass wearing a mask
black garters in lingerie
socks that are knee-high
don’t get me aroused like an N95 😊

Let’s dip back to my pad to do things wild and obscene
after you flashing the card that says you got the vaccine!

Might be afraid to socialize; call me chicken or rooster
but I’d love to meet your two breasts if they come with a booster!

Safe sex ain’t nothing less than condoms I keep in my wallet
all it tells me
is you care about safety
a compassionate being
to acknowledge other medical needs
makes this cripple weak at the knees
like I wasn’t already
checking my breath
I’ll freshen up with a mint
after your negative test
the free one from Biden
I’d love to just slide in
your DMs
so you’ll be scratching my back to give me scars in the nude
instead of SARS-2
making boo boos and ouchies
tie me up with a whip
while I scream, “Anthony Fauci!” <3

The cases are down, but baby I’m up
let’s shelter in place
with my hips to your waist
pulsing with love

Down about Covid?
I’ll read you erotic poems by Ovid
sexting you up so good you won’t care that ain’t nothing open!
PPE excites my pp
and you’re super fine
gimme a sign
but not if you out maskless

I’m a pass on that
for like
a couple of weeks
after that hmu and maybe we can get back to
knocking the knees
I get horny to see
you avoiding Omicron
make me come out the shower
and drop my robe like I was Obi-Wan
resurfacing later sometime around noon
to do it again after your meeting on Zoom
I’m naked most days now lifting weights in the back
nothing gets me hotter
than when you’re wearing a mask!
On my 53 birthday my soul is so dry, as I fight the temptation to forever close my eyes.
The choking frustration, the bitter cold of reality
The unmistakable fear of coming calamity.
What in the world must I have been, in a previous life that so did me in.
Well if this life is nothing but a punishment, then God please end it now, hang my head like an ornament

She sits on a corner
Of a frozen,
Dirty street,
Sign in hand,
“Homeless,
Hungry,
Please
Help”
Surrounded by
Piles of bags
Meant to keep the
Monsters at bay
The monsters
Who avoid
Her eyes,
Ignoring her plea.
Some spout
Venom,
Their faces
Contorted, hateful
And others,
Only she
Can feel,
And see.

Speak the ocean,
He said to me,
On a bright,
And sunny
Summer’s day

He didn’t recognize
The woman that
Accompanied him,
And he didn’t care.

There’s no happiness
Like lovers lost,
In a dream, their
Ignorance, bliss.

I surrender to the
Calmness of the
Mediterranean sea
As it takes me home.

Prisons are the Temples
where
Devils learn to Play
Honing
Skills of Deviance
with
Each waking Day
Every
Time we turn the key
We twist the knife
of
fate
Because every time
we
Cage
A
man
We Close Him in
with
Hate
If the man is strong enough
to leave the
cage
filled with love
Vs
Hate
there is a chance
He will
accomplish
something great.
And that is How
Society shuffles
with fate

His toes flowered out of the busted shoes, long curling nails, peeling skin, ripe and bursting into decay. He had fastened cardboard shields around his feet with strapping tape.

He lay on the sidewalk asleep among bags of his belongings. I stood over him, half my hamburger and a handful of fries in a cardboard box, but I didn’t want to wake him.

My husband said he’d give him his own shoes, but I saw they wouldn’t fit the swollen feet. I wanted to wash those feet, cut the nails, slide them into soft slippers.

I imagined sitting the man up against the chain link fence, feeding him something warm, building him a tiny house. Instead I walked away and wrote about it.

Because no one should have to choose between helping a friend and paying the rent.

A woman in a wheelchair shouldn’t worry where her next meal’s coming from. Not in my America.

Virtual rent parties are fine, but why should she have to throw one? What are my taxes going for, anyway?

Seven-year-old tried to sell his stuffed bear for food on the street. Seriously? In my America!

Policeman took the child out for lunch while his partner went to the house, found more kids who hadn’t eaten for days.

Because no one should have to choose between their teddy bear and food. Not in my America.

Did you know we have a podcast?
Get answers to your burning questions about poverty and homelessness wherever you get your podcasts.
PLUS! Stay tuned for our upcoming 2023 Poetry Episode to hear poets from this issue reading their pieces aloud!

https://www.streetsheet.org/street-speak-podcast/
Final Form (dedicated to mark major)

My ultimate form is a piece of trash in the street
(not everything is a groundscore)
find me pick me up
twist me into a new style
stop crying like some rich girl and
smoke this door.

... Find me discarded in a puddle of water in it next to me is the chillest pigeon
ive ever seen.
... groundscore!

El Joker

Anonymos

#5(contranym)
Done the day?
He asked with a slight downward nod both hands palm down on the invisible
table in front or him, he continued into the liquor store.

Tostilocos please.
hers hands parted slid across some invisible floating panel above the counter
and she slightly nodded her head downward.
uhh yes please (i know so many words in spanish i hafta pull a finger outta my
nose to count them all.)

4 more essentials:
Pero
Guerro
Pinche
Flaca

WHAT I WANTED TO TELL YOU

I've been emotional
Allowing the chemicals
Inside and outside of me
To manage me
Pull my strings
Make me dance
Dance baby dance
With fleeting thoughts
Uncontrollable
Unsustainable
Untraceable
To their point of origin
I can see them
Racing around
Like rats in a maze
Match my emotions
Fueled by the toxicity
They've lost their way
And somehow
The moment passes
And my actions
Speak louder
Than the megaphone
Of my heart
And I'll never get to say
What I wanted to tell you
I can't seem to say
What I wanted to tell you

VULNERABILITY

My life growing up wasn't all peaches and cream,
I was told to be silent about abuse done to me!
How dare you shut me up when you know you are wrong,
God gave me a mouth to speak on how you raised both me and my son.
It's not Christian like to tell me stop when you are holding grudges,
God gave me a gift to write my story so I'm sorry if I'm pushing your buttons.
That's unfair for you but it's fair for me and God,
Pleasing Him is my priority I don't need no side talk!
You're worried about what other think and I'm worried about healing,
Maybe you should consider opening up and stop bottling up your feelings.
My children deserve to know the truth of their neglect,
I was deep in my alcohol addiction that I painfully regret.
The Lord is my witness I started drinking because of you,
I have feelings and I have the right to stop this madness and expose the truth.
Gone intervened in my life to be an inspiration to younger generations,
My experience in the past can make a difference in people's lives and true motivation!
God blessed me with the gift to write,
I have to express what's on my mind.
Writing is how I cope,
Instead of isolating myself and mope.
You suggest I find another hobby,
What's wrong with writing it makes me happy!
No one can take away what God bestowed on me as a gift and a talent!
My purpose is glorifying the Lord of His goodness despite my menace!
I feel victorious of how God delivered me,
The road is tough but that's when faith comes in.
The world needs my voice to encourage and empower,
It starts with me first by carefully taking the road that's narrow!
I am doing the footwork to live for Christ,
It's hard but it's possible with God on my side!
My apology Dad if I hurt your feelings,
My feelings are valid I wish you know their meaning!
I don't see nothing wrong with exposing you at all,
You should be proud of me that I'm coming up strong!
BREAKING:
INJUNCTION WON AGAINST ENCAMPMENT SWEEPS IN SAN FRANCISCO! SEE AN ILLEGAL SWEEP? REPORT IT HERE —>
HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/FSUGKK1TEUVK7FLW6

V. CONCLUSION
For the foregoing reasons, Plaintiff’s motion for a preliminary injunction is granted as follows:

I. Defendants are preliminarily enjoined from enforcing or threatening to enforce, or using California Penal Code section 148(e) to enforce or threaten to enforce, the following laws and ordinances to prohibit involuntarily homeless individuals from sitting, lying, or sleeping on public property:

- California Penal Code section 647(e)
- California Penal Code section 370
- California Penal Code section 372
- San Francisco Police Code section 168
- San Francisco Police Code section 169

This preliminary injunction shall remain effective as long as there are more homeless individuals in San Francisco than there are shelter beds available.

II. Defendants are preliminarily enjoined from violating San Francisco’s bag and tag policy as embodied in DPW Procedure No. 16-05-08 (REV 03).

IT IS SO ORDERED.
Date: December 23, 2022