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STREET SHEET

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Poster Syndicate
San Francisco

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CARE COURT IN CALIFORNIA: A PRIMER

Gloria Lightheart

In September of 2022, Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law Senate Bill 1338, creating a mental health court. The Community Assistance Recovery & Empowerment (CARE) court program empowers a judge to compel people with mental health disabilities or substance abuse issues to accept psychiatric treatment and medication against their will. The legislature approved the bill on a near-unanimous vote. The state Senate voted 38 to 0 in favor.

A court-appointed conservator would make financial and health care decisions and control a patient's medication and treatment — powerful brain-altering drugs delivered initially at an involuntary temporary stay in a residential psychiatric facility. Could this be the housing promised by Gov. Newsom when he announced his CARE Court plan?

The CARE Court is opposed by more than 40 advocates for unhoused people, legal, civil rights, human rights, and disability rights groups, including Human Rights Watch and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), who has called the conservatorship "... the greatest deprivation of civil liberties aside from the death penalty." Set up by undeclared presidential candidate Newsom to get the unhoused off the streets, CARE Court is backed by the Big City Mayor's Coalition, including San Francisco Mayor London Breed and San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan.

But one need not be unhoused nor mentally ill, nor diagnosed with substance use disorders

substance abuser to qualify for being hauled into CARE Court, even if one hasn't committed a crime and is not a danger to themselves or others. First, a petition must be filed with the Court by "specified individuals" such as a relative, community member or police officer, and backed by a signed affidavit from a behavioral clinician diagnosing you as being on the spectrum of schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders. Those who dispute such diagnoses: If you insist you are sane, you might be suffering from "anosognosia," or lack of awareness of a mental health condition that you are ill, according to the Schizophrenia & Psychosis Action Alliance, which preaches "compassionate involuntary intervention."

Ultimately, it is up to the CARE Court judge to speculate whether you have the decision-making capacity for your own medical care, and if not, depriving you of your right to self-determination.

Originally published in the People's Tribune



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coalition.networkforgood.com

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.

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Street Sheet is published and distributed on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We recognize and honor the ongoing presence and stewardship of the original people of this land. We recognize that homelessness can not truly be ended until this land is returned to its original stewards.

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END HOMELESSNESS!**

STREET SHEET is currently recruiting vendors to sell the newspaper around San Francisco.

Vendors pick up the papers for free at our office in the Tenderloin and sell them for \$2 apiece at locations across the City. You get to keep all the money you make from sales! Sign up to earn extra income while also helping elevate the voices of the homeless writers who make this paper so unique, and promoting the vision of a San Francisco where every human being has a home.

TO SIGN UP, VISIT OUR OFFICE AT 280 TURK ST FROM 10AM-4PM ON MONDAY-THURSDAY AND 10AM-NOON ON FRIDAY

BERKELEY HOMELESS SERVICES PANEL OF EXPERTS POSTPONES REFERRAL OF GOOD NEIGHBOR GUIDELINES

BRADLEY PENNER

New guidelines would dictate how officials prioritize encampment sweeps in the City of Berkeley

Berkeley officials have drafted an encampment accountability policy that would determine how to prioritize sweeps throughout the city. Known as the “Good Neighbor Guidelines,” the policy asks encampment residents to abide by a series of rules that, if violated, would lead to a range of interventions including the posting of public notices to voluntarily relocate, providing health and hygiene resources, voluntary trash removal, deep cleanings, and encampment closures.

The guidelines were developed by Assistant to the City Manager Peter Radu to be included in the city’s Encampment Response Policy—a draft policy that city staff began working on in 2018 in response to the growing number of people living on city streets.

As currently written, the draft guidelines use the personal accountability of homeless people to determine when and how the city should perform an intervention.

The current draft of the guidelines are:

- Please throw away your trash and old food.
- Please keep your belongings out of the road.
- Please do not build any structures out of wood, metal, or other materials that can create a fire hazard or injury risk.
- Please try to stay to one sidewalk side of the street.
- Please be fire safe.

The draft Encampment Response Policy includes an outline for the city’s tiered approach for intervention, ranked “lowest, medium, and highest” priority. Encampments that would be “low priority” for intervention would meet the Good Neighbor Guidelines, and include residents who limit their possessions to a footprint of no more than 9 square feet outside their tent or vehicle. Encampments considered the highest priority for closure include those that pose “imminent health hazards, including rodents and rodent harborage conditions, syringes, and

raw sewage.”

Encampments in violation of the Good Neighbor Guidelines would be subject to intervention at the city’s discretion, but as currently written, the policy does not describe how the city would determine when to provide resources, such as portable toilets and trash pickup.

In response to a question from panel member Donnell Jones regarding how the city would ensure encampments receive resources such as dumpsters or portable toilets before being cited for non-compliance, Radu stated that the city intends to apply “progressive engagement strategies to mitigate impacts,” but will maintain “flexible application” of intervention strategies on a case-by-case basis.

Furthermore, encampment communities that follow the guidelines may still be considered medium or high priority if the city determines they are causing “interference with businesses and residences and [sic] public infrastructure,” or are considered “hindrances to construction or other City-issued permits.” Medium and high-priority encampments will be subject to closure if violations “cannot be resolved with less intensive interventions [and] whenever possible, given limited city resources, closures shall be performed in accordance with Federal best practices.”

The policy states that “citation/arrest will be reserved for case-by-case situations [that] cannot be resolved with non-criminal interventions.”

Radu introduced the Good Neighbor Guidelines to Berkeley’s Homeless Services Panel of Experts (HSPE) at a public meeting on October 4. The HSPE is a city council-appointed civilian committee that makes recommendations “on how and to what extent the City should establish and/or fund programs to end or prevent homelessness in Berkeley.” If approved by the HSPE, the guidelines will be referred to the Berkeley City Council for review. If they are approved

by the council, they will become part of the city’s Encampment Response Policy.

In response to the presentation, members of HSPE made note of the fact that the city’s lack of available health and hygiene resources—such as dumpsters, portable toilets, handwashing stations, and showers—have directly contributed to conditions the guidelines seek to address.

“I want to say that providing porta potties and dumpsters—as many as are needed from the city—is a simple act both of kindness, of respect, and of solving a lot of the stress that people are under,” panel member Denah Bookstein said.

“I really can’t emphasize that enough. It’s a basic human need—you can’t expect people to walk three blocks or half a mile to a porta potty. And if there’s a congregation of people, you can’t expect to have one porta potty to serve the needs of the people. I

don’t think it’s an issue of finding the money. I think it’s an issue of top priority.”

During an extensive public comment period, Berkeley residents also voiced concerns about the policy’s ambiguous language, stringent expectations of unhoused residents, and for framing basic resources such as dumpsters and portable toilets as interventions that, if prioritized in place of closure, would give homeless people the same opportunity to live tidy and safe lives as their housed neighbors.

At the end of the October 4 meeting, HSPE motioned to appoint a subcommittee to further discuss the policy before referring it to the city council. The goal is to collect feedback from the public in time to refer the policy to the council before its meeting on January 3, 2024.

Bradley Penner is the Co-Editor in Chief of Street Spirit, where this article was originally published



FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA PALESTINE WILL BE FREE

We are witnessing an ongoing genocide in Palestine and carried out by the settler state of Israel with the financial and political support of the US government. Israel has an organized military, an iron dome, and has dropped 12,000 tons of explosives on Gaza since Oct 7th, killing at least 8,000 people as of Oct 29. For decades Israel has controlled access to electricity, movement, water, food, and internet to Palestinians, which now puts the people of Gaza in a perilous humanitarian crisis. The Israeli Defense Force is openly committing war crimes, including bombing hospitals, mosques, evacuation routes and dropping white phosphorus on Palestinians.

CEASEFIRE NOW! Here are some ways to take action!

1. CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AND DEMAND THEY SUPPORT AN IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE IN GAZA!

California's senators are Alex Padilla, who can be reached at (415) 981-9369 & Laphonza Butler, who can be reached at (202) 224-3841! Not sure who your representatives are? No problem! US Campaign for Palestinian Rights (USPCR) has created this very helpful tool to help you find out who to call and what to say.



SCAN ME

2. AMPLIFY THE VOICES OF PALESTINIANS AND NAME THIS AS GENOCIDE TO EVERYONE YOU KNOW

While the situation unfolding is complicated, it is our responsibility to speak up when our tax dollars and our government are funding an ethnic cleansing of Palestinian people from their homeland in Gaza. Talk with your classmates, your friends, your family, and let them know why you support a ceasefire and an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Palestinians under constant bombing in Gaza are sharing their stories on social media in English because they need us to know what our government is doing in our name. Post and re-post on social media to break the silence!



CONNECT WITH PEOPLE ON INSTAGRAM FOR NEWS AND ACTION OPPORTUNITIES

ANTI-ZIONIST JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

@IFNOTNOWORG
@JEWISHVOICEFORPEACE
IJAN.ORG (NO INSTA)

PALESTINIAN ACCOUNTS

@WIZARD_BISAN1
@JOEGAZA93
@NOURAERAKAT
@BYPLESTIA
@ABORJELAA
@GAZANGIRL
@JENANMATARI
@WAEEL_ELAHDOUH

ARAB/PALESTINIAN LIBERATION GROUPS

@AROC_BAYAREA
@USCPR
@PAL_ACTIONUS
@CAIR_NATIONAL
@PALESTINIANYOUTHMOVEMENT



3. BOYCOTT ISRAELI PRODUCTS

The Boycott-Divest-Sanction (BDS) movement is a great way to support the ongoing work toward peace in Palestine! The main targets of this movement right now are Starbucks, McDonalds, and Disney. Scan here to learn what to boycott.



SCAN ME

4. LEARN MORE

Beyond instagram, there are a lot of great sources to learn about the history of the colonial occupation of Palestine and the current ethnic cleansing Israel is carrying out.

+ jewishcurrents.org
+ Democracy Now
+ Al Jazeera News
+ Palestine Teach-In on the Dig podcast

NO TO APEC

Joemae Santos

This year, San Francisco will host APEC downtown at the Moscone center. The summit is a convening of 21 heads of states, primarily from the Indo-Pacific region, where they will discuss economic foreign policies. With these policies come agreements that will only benefit the politically elite and the wealthy such as the privatization of industries or the establishment of agreements binding one country’s resources to the interest of another.

With the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit set for November 11 to 17, the city’s attempt to push a positive public perception of the event has been challenged by the growing opposition to APEC.

Though the summit discusses a variety of economic policies, it is not the marginalized and oppressed who gain any advantage from them. This negative impact has been particularly highlighted by the national NO2APEC coalition of nearly a hundred organizations nationwide, representing a variety of people from labor, youth and students and housing groups. Protests, teach-ins, and community forums have

also taken place.

The city has emphasized that this is the biggest event of this magnitude since 1945 when SF hosted the establishment of the United Nations. A whopping \$20 million fundraising goal to host the event was announced earlier in the spring which has since been achieved through donations in the millions by corporations like Graton Casino and Doordash and other grandiose fundraising efforts held by the mayor such as the launch held at the Asian Art Museum. Because of the “national security” designation of the event, secret service, US coast guard and other police personnel will all be present during APEC. An “all hands on deck” order for the San Francisco Police Department will also be implemented where additional expenses may be expended through utilizing the \$10 million public funds reserve..

In tandem with APEC preparations, the city has been ramping up their attacks on homeless advocacy organizations. By exploiting the recent court clarification on who is involuntarily homeless, the city has increased sweeps. This

aligns with the APEC timeline to make San Francisco attractive and appealing to the thousands of visitors. These heightened sweeps continue despite San Francisco not having a systematic form of outreach to the unhoused to offer housing, and the compounded aspect of most shelters being inaccessible, at capacity, or simply not a shelter with basic accommodations like a bed.

Individuals across San Francisco have also expressed criticism and concern against APEC. During the October 24 Board of Supervisors hearing, over 50 community members uplifted concerns over the exclusion zone that will secure the event. Seniors and residents of the SoMa commented on the negative impact on their day to day life such as the re-routing of public transportation, accessibility to get groceries, and the ability for caregivers to reach them. The hearing resulted in the unanimous passing of a resolution that asserted the \$10 million reserve of public funds be used for the concerns of the public. Though non-binding, the passing of the resolution is symbolic of the growing opposition to APEC.

The slogan ,“APEC will be epic” can be seen on several signs across San Francisco but as one reads this message one can’t help but question “epic” for whom? The movement against APEC continues to broaden and strengthen each day by linking and raising the local issues to the international impact of APEC. It is clear that the people of San Francisco- the ones who make this city- will continue to push back against initiatives that only benefit the rich and powerful. APEC is not for the people of the Asia Pacific. APEC is not for the people of San Francisco.

Two events to oppose APEC will take place the weekend of November 11-12. The People’s Counter Summit at San Francisco State University will host hundreds of individuals from across the nation where people will understand more deeply the impacts of APEC. The day after a mass mobilization of an expected 1,000 in attendance will begin at embarcadero plaza with a march on market with the program concluding near APEC.

Wherever APEC will be, the people will come out in full force!

ORGANIZE WITH US

HOUSING JUSTICE WORKING GROUP TUESDAYS @ NOON

The Housing Justice Workgroup is working toward a San Francisco in which every human being can have and maintain decent, habitable, safe, and secure housing. This meeting is in English and Spanish and open to everyone! Email mcarrera@cohsf.org to get involved!

HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP WEDNESDAYS @12:30

The Human Rights Workgroup has been doing some serious heavy lifting on these issues: conducting direct research, outreach to people on the streets, running multiple campaigns, developing policy, staging direct actions, capturing media attention, and so much more. All those down for the cause are welcome to join! Email lpierce@cohsf.org

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN OUR
WORKING GROUP MEETINGS!



HOMELESSNESS AND COLONIZATION

KIARA GABRIEL

Homelessness is a serious issue affecting many communities around the world, including indigenous populations. In many cases, the loss of indigenous land has been identified as a major contributing factor to homelessness among these populations. Let's explore the relationship between the loss of indigenous land and homelessness, and the various ways in which this problem can be addressed.

Indigenous populations have been displaced and dispossessed of their lands and resources for centuries. For example, tribes such as the already-displaced Lenape (Delaware tribe), Kickapoo and Shawnee, were removed from Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio during the 1820s. The Potawatomi were forced out of Wisconsin and Michigan in late 1838, and were resettled in Kansas Territory. This displacement has been caused by a range of factors, including colonization, forced relocation, and government policies that have prioritized economic development over the rights and interests of indigenous peoples. As a result, many indigenous people have been forced to move away from their

traditional lands and into urban areas, where they face a range of social, economic, and cultural challenges.

One of the main consequences of the loss of indigenous land is homelessness. Indigenous people who have been forced to leave their traditional lands often lack the resources and support networks needed to establish stable housing in urban areas. They may struggle to find affordable housing, or they may face discrimination and marginalization that makes it difficult for them to access housing and support services. As a result, many indigenous people end up living on the streets or in unstable and overcrowded housing situations.

The impact of homelessness on indigenous populations is significant. Homelessness can exacerbate a range of health and social problems, including mental illness, substance abuse, and family breakdown. It can also perpetuate cycles of poverty and marginalization, making it difficult for individuals and families to establish stable and meaningful lives.

In addition, homelessness can

undermine the cultural traditions and practices that are essential to the survival and well-being of indigenous communities. It has profound consequences on indigenous communities as it threatens the very essence of their cultural heritage and identity. When indigenous individuals are without stable housing, they often lose their connection to ancestral lands and traditional practices, which are essential for their survival and well-being. The breakdown of social support structures and increased health vulnerabilities further exacerbate the challenges they face in preserving their rich cultural traditions. In essence, homelessness not only represents a housing crisis but also a cultural crisis for indigenous peoples, necessitating holistic solutions that address both their housing needs and the safeguarding of their cultural heritage.

To address homelessness caused by the loss of indigenous land, there are a range of strategies that can be implemented. One important strategy is to prioritize the needs and interests of indigenous communities in policies and programs related to housing and land use. This can involve working with

indigenous leaders and organizations to develop culturally appropriate housing options, as well as providing support for traditional land use practices and community development initiatives.

Another important strategy is to address the root causes of indigenous land loss. This can involve working to address the legacy of colonization and historical injustices that have contributed to the displacement of indigenous people. It can also involve supporting efforts to reclaim and protect traditional lands and resources, including through legal and political advocacy.

Finally, it is important to recognize the diverse and complex needs of indigenous communities in addressing homelessness. This may involve developing targeted strategies that take into account the unique cultural, social, and economic circumstances of different indigenous populations. It may also involve building partnerships and collaborations between indigenous and non-indigenous organizations and communities to work towards common goals.

POVERTY IN THE CITY BY THE BAY

SERENA ANDREW

San Francisco, the City by the Bay, with its iconic landmarks and vibrant culture, has long been hailed as a symbol of prosperity and innovation. However, behind the shining facade lies a harsh reality that many fail to see: poverty. I share with you my personal story, a journey from the shadows of destitution to the rays of hope that permeate the streets of San Francisco.

My tale begins with a humble upbringing in one of the city's low-income neighborhoods. My parents, hardworking individuals striving to provide for our family, faced the constant challenges that poverty brings. Despite the scarcity of resources, they instilled in me a strong work ethic and an unwavering determination to break free from the chains of economic disparity.

As I ventured into my teenage years, the realities of poverty became more apparent. The school I attended

struggled with limited funding, resulting in overcrowded classrooms and outdated textbooks. The lack of educational resources hindered our chances of upward mobility, making it a constant battle to keep pace with peers from more affluent backgrounds.

Outside the classroom, the face of poverty in San Francisco became increasingly visible. Tent cities sprouted in the shadows of towering skyscrapers, and the streets echoed with the voices of the homeless, their stories of despair seeping into the fabric of the city. I witnessed firsthand the toll that poverty takes on individuals, eroding their self-worth and potential.

Amidst the harsh realities, I discovered the strength of community. Organizations and individuals dedicated to uplifting those in need emerged as beacons of hope. Shelters provided refuge for the homeless, soup kitchens offered warm meals, and community

centers became safe havens for the impoverished. Volunteering my time and resources, I experienced the transformative power of extending a helping hand to those in desperate situations.

While the shadows of poverty threatened to consume me, I refused to surrender. Determined to carve out a brighter future, I embraced education as my ticket out of destitution. Scholarships and mentorship programs became lifelines, offering opportunities to expand my knowledge and skills. I strived to excel academically, knowing that education would be my weapon against the cyclical nature of poverty.

With perseverance and a stroke of luck, I earned a scholarship to a prestigious university in San Francisco. The journey from poverty to higher education was both humbling and empowering. It exposed me to a diverse array of experiences and perspectives, widening

my horizons and fueling my passion for social change.

Today, as I reflect on my journey through poverty in San Francisco, I am reminded of the countless individuals still trapped in its grip. The city's ongoing struggle with homelessness and economic disparity serves as a call to action. We must continue to advocate for affordable housing, quality education, and comprehensive support systems to break the cycle of poverty.

My personal story is but one among many narratives of poverty in San Francisco. It is a testament to the resilience of individuals determined to rise above their circumstances. By shedding light on this issue, we can foster empathy, promote meaningful change, and strive towards a San Francisco where opportunities are accessible to all, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

MY QUEST TO AVOID BECOMING HOMELESS

JACK BRAGEN

Our streets have become a dumping ground for unfortunate people who could not keep up with the expectations of society. In the bottom of our socioeconomic structure, there is a giant trapdoor through which people can fall, if they can't keep pace.

Disabled people who can't keep up with full-time, professional work, will often fall through this trapdoor. If their family is unwilling or unable to provide enough help, this lubricates the hinges of the trapdoor. If the unwary person enrolls in predatory credit, it adds extra momentum downward.

And the aforementioned is terrifying.

I am 59 years old, and my chances of obtaining full-time professional work are nil. I continue to exist at the willingness of people in the social services systems. But I know that I need to get in gear with something. And I haven't arrived at the Holy Grail of a good source of enough money to live on.

When young, we have that illusion of immortality. That goes away at about the same time that the inevitable medical conditions of getting older enter the picture.

I never thought this could happen to me. And now I'm scrambling to make it not happen. And that's my agenda at this point.

I've watched television news interviews of people who ended up homeless. Their stories often include close relatives turning their backs. In my case, it is not so much that relatives will turn their backs. My family is great. Yet most members have very limited resources and can't house me if something were to go wrong.

Unfortunately, the term "safety net" has become an outdated and ridiculed terminology.

So, from where I stand, I'm trying to prevent my own homelessness in part by looking at what didn't work for other people who fell through that trapdoor.

Where I live, there is a possibility of a great number of evictions in the coming months. The building is scheduled to be renovated. I haven't dealt with that because I was too preoccupied with meeting

my immediate needs and dealing with the aftermath of physically separating with my spouse. I had an opportunity to move to more permanent housing several months back, but I was so spent--having moved to where I am now that I couldn't wrap my mind and body around doing a second move so soon. But now it strikes me that I was in denial.

Because I wasn't dealing with facts well enough, I could end up reaping grim results.

Yet I can't really be homeless. This is because I would become deceased if I was on the street for more than a couple of days. I have medical issues, and I don't have the physical ability to withstand the elements or to postpone eating and drinking.

MONDAY MORNING: I decided it was the time I needed to do my cigarette run before the parking situation would become impossible. (Where I live, the parking gets filled by eight-thirty, and any empty spaces are rapidly filled.)

My car does the job very well by taking me to the nearby convenience store.

I get out of the car, and a man who sits on the ground, thirty yards away, yells, "Good Morning!" in a loud, warbling tone. I do not respond. I go into the store, buy a pack of cigarettes, and step back out the door.

A woman stands nearby, maybe ten feet from me. She is blonde haired, pretty (by most men's standards) and wearing a jean jacket.

"Change, sir?"

I do not respond. I wanted to say sorry and that I needed to hang onto my money. But I do not speak, and I get back into the car. And I am acutely aware, this could happen to me. But it couldn't happen, because if I were to become homeless, I wouldn't last, and there would be no ability to stand and ask for spare

change.

I return to the same parking space in front of the apartment building. I hobble to the elevator on painful, arthritic knees. I get to my unit, and I think to myself, this apartment building is one rung above being homeless. So, I hope the management is happy with me.

I want to get into housing where there is no fear of being cast out. I need to upgrade my gig work so that it can bring in decent money. Can fearfulness induce better performance at this?

I am not young. And yet I can see a possibly long and difficult road ahead. I can only hope to resolve this and to have maybe a good ten years of not struggling and remaining in adequate health, so that I can enjoy a few things.

This is not the life I had hoped for. My chances were compromised at a young age when I became mentally ill, when I had an encounter with the criminal justice system, was diagnosed schizophrenic and put on medication, and was prognosed that I would do "fairly well for a long time..." --the words of Dr. Trachtenberg. There was a generation of psychiatrists who lacked any real empathy or humanization of mentally ill patients.

At the time I became mentally ill, homelessness had not reached the immense proportions of today, and it was not considered to be a looming threat. Having some type of housing was presumed a given. Through the nineteen eighties, into the nineties, and to today, the structure has changed. It is normalized to see people falling apart and dying on the streets.

If the best that I can hope for is to have five or ten years of "the good life" then I've been robbed. But for now, I will be happy when I can be in safe, clean, comfortable housing, a home that's not in jeopardy, that I can afford.

The danger of homelessness and the horrifying consequences that come with it are modern-day realities. They are genuinely real specters for millions of Americans. Yet the biggest hindrance toward taking action to avoid it is my own fearfulness. If I can act from a place of confidence and not fear, I will be one step ahead.

There is no reliable method of predicting the future. And there is value to living in "the now." If I can be happy right now, with what I have--and without what I don't have, in that case, I might be getting the most I can get. This is not to discard working for a better future. This is not to discard anticipating future disasters and attempting to avoid them--these are necessary things. Yet it helps to take a vacation from the avoidance of future calamities. And in this vacation, I can enjoy a sandwich of salami and fake cheese on white bread. I can enjoy room temperature instant coffee that I wish I could put ice into. When I have that, I've given myself a few moments of relaxation, and I can take a breath, and eventually take on my problems when I am ready to do so.

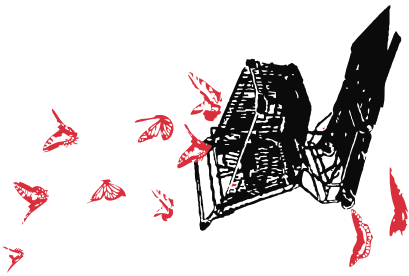
Homelessness often strikes people when they get older and when they do not have parents to fall back on. So, I must be especially careful. My mother is like an angel. She has often lived vicariously through her kids. She has done things for her kids that are far beyond what should be expected. My mother is God. And when I get to the point where I cannot rely on her help, I will truly have to be a fully grown man, and this will be a very hard thing to do.

But some day, (and currently I am approaching age 60) I will have to be a man. And this transition will be a necessary one, a stage in growth and development that has been postponed far too long. And in the process of this, I'm writing stories about it, stories that will outlive me. No one can predict the future. But maybe my stories will last a while and will entertain and enlighten people in future generations. And maybe that makes it worth enduring a little bit of fear.

Jack Bragen lives and writes in Martinez, California.

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ANNUAL STREET SHEET POETRY EDITION

Now accepting submissions
of poems and artwork for
our January 1st issue!

Deadline: December 8th

Submit by email to
tjohnston@cohsf.org or in
person to 280 Turk St

STREET SPIRIT—THE HOMELESS NEWSPAPER OF THE EAST BAY—IS
CURRENTLY FUNDRAISING TO GET BACK IN PRINT. WE HAVE RAISED
OVER \$100K THIS SUMMER, WHICH WAS AMAZING! WE ARE CURRENTLY
150K AWAY FROM REACHING OUR GOAL.

YOU CAN HELP STREET SPIRIT GET
BACK OUT ONTO EAST BAY STREETS BY
DONATING ONLINE, HERE:

[PAYPAL.COM/PAYPALME/
STREETSPIRITNEWS](https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/streetspiritnews)

STAY CONNECTED BY JOINING OUR
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