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STREET SHEET IS READER SUPPORTED, ADVERTISING FREE, AND AIMS TO LIFT UP THE VOICES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY IN SAN FRANCISCO.

STREET SHEET



CURRENTLY ALSO DISTRIBUTED BY STREET SPIRIT VENDORS IN THE EAST BAY



RECOVERY

Tatiana Lyulkin

One step at a time,
Baby steps,
One foot in front of the other-
You will get there
In time.
You will heal,
Your pain and confusion
Will not last forever,
You're a warrior,
A dreamer,
A survivor.

Stop and listen
To the gentle whispers
Of the night,
Listen to your soul,
To your wounded heart,
Dare to believe,
To ask for help,
To trust in others,
To build communities,
To love.

Choose life,
Choose healing and hope,
Paint the sky
In the colors
Borrowed from the sky
And the sea.

Embrace a new dawn,
A new day,
A new beginning.

THE YOUNG

By Waverly

It's slavery
or homelessness
he says

He chooses
His hard
Dignity

One day soon
All the homeless
Will join force
And then

My lord
I am young
And grimed

A mad-eyed boy's
Brindled pitbull
Brought onto BART

'Money is the root of all evil
Do yourself a favor
Give me yours'

Pregnant and stressed
Any help is a blessing

Help me
And the boy
Thank u
God bless

Hungry
Hungry
hobo

HELP KEEP STREET SHEET IN PRINT!



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

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

PHOTOGRAPHERS
VIDEOGRAPHERS
TRANSLATORS
COMIC ARTISTS
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WEBSITE
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CONTACT:

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FAIRYTALE

sam palos kraemer

Sometimes I laugh
cause there's nothing else to do
It makes some people mad
but I can't help it
Every day we add to the poem
But it's never finished
I'm an emotional creature
Baseless sorrow and shameful joy
I feel it all in spades
All good stories get embellished
So forgive my long-winded tale
It's not done yet

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.

THIS ISN'T HOW IT ALWAYS WAS

Robb Eisenberg

This isn't how it always was.
The homeless, you see, were not what you are led to believe.

A ladder you and your brother seek.
Behind my camp, my stuff, my bottles, and cans.

We weren't always in the way.
You came to see us, don't you remember?
This was a famous café, under the freeway.

Your mom and dad, your family, and friends.
Well, this is how it all ends.

A wash boy, a table buser, so very important, needed.
Then the costs went up, and they were the first on the street.
No longer clean and neat.

Then again, an owner to the manager, tells a waiter or two,
I can no longer pay for you.
Next on the street, but with families not able to eat.

Then a bartender, an assistant manager.

Now an owner with no staff, cleaning, and cooking.
No more sleep for him, stress, and anger kicks in.

Then there were three.
A cook, an owner, and the last waiter, me.

No more glorious food, but whatever you could get.

Cruel old patrons.
So willing to give a tip before, now rudely shut their doors.

Now all the doors are closed, blocked by wooden boards.
Everything is taken and sold off to pay off debts, an owner stands
alone in the cold.

This is our home now, a tent trash, rodents of the street.
Starving for food where everyone came to eat.

So, take your ladders and go back to work and remember how it all
is.
Because.
It may not be how it always was.

ON DESERTS

Jade Mar

~+*Weathered walking through desert sands
Wind pushes against
fragile joints aching
While remaining gentle momentum

Footstep metronome

a strap, carrying only necessary supplies
it cross-sects the torso.
Within the satchel contains multitudes
of relics long lost to
the mind's fortress, places only local to a specific heart,

To the desert's hollows
As they whistle on

Just like I, trudging forward

Knowing this body as borrowed

continuing onwards until I finally reach that line in the distance
The one that separates ground from sky

I wish it would kiss me
just how the sun kisses it nightly
escaping view

visible elsewhere but not here

The wind continues its violent push
can't they see the nebulas have just arrived?

Without the ability to see much else besides what lays before me,
I search for those landscapes tucked away behind my eyes
Always and only for
for safe keeping
to crack
unlock the vault

away from stimulus
silence
be the code I search for

the way my eyelids close every night,
synonymous to seeing stars*+~

BETTER THAN WORDS

Vivian Imperial

The homeless man
plopped down on the streetcar seat,
looking relieved to have a place to rest.
He covered his face with his hands
and put his head down —
a little privacy in a frantic world.
When he looked up
I offered him a snack.
Instead of speaking,
he covered his face with his hands again
and I was afraid I had been intrusive.
But, no...
I watched his fingers form a lovely
heart-shape to thank me.

POETRY SPACE



Solange Cuba

ROUND TRIP

exit wounds that refuse to be one way tunnels a knife's point gets sharper the more it dulls its edges on rock when these flowers who could not be saved by others weeping have dried will creased hands press to preserve them between pages? nothing can live behind glass put a frame around a starving family and suddenly they become a philosophical question rather than anyone's responsibility	the more we hoard and heap it who really ever has use for a word like goodbye anyway? when the wars wage on our fingers fail to rest and shoes warm their soles by what fires will have them your feet slid their palms along the edge of the high wire while my skin was fired from a cannon both failing to draw blood in their spectacle	from these temporal cages of creation? are these the places we get free? woke up in the car crash shards of face floating on glass our points of intersection frayed tender tendrils reaching from unraveling balls of yarn we bloodied my hands sweat soap cinnamon wash this bloody baptism steering column snapped down death cult avenue sold our souls to keep an arm and a leg for a car we figured would only make it halfway there from a dealership owned by white pustules getting high off of african coal cruising on the con of 50% off freedom with a sales tax of enslavement they say, "you fix the roads where we've put your bodies in the pavement" no wonder there are so many potholes exit wounds of the dead with unfinished business who will not rest till we tear up these trails that severed and parceled these lands part of us knew the car would be totaled once we crossed those thin white lines eyes catch mine our hands home our forearms partners in crime cost of living burning down the edge of a cigarette filter spirits seeping sway hearts beating, pleading isn't living price enough to pay? i know you love your children from how you fight like the sprout that cracks the shell of the seed they love you too and are proud of what you are making easy to forget they're watching you too sometimes ain't it? when their tiny hands press into yours to guide them along the page or gently press a pause in a sentence that was about to run off a cliff	when the to be when the a when the tick to the c when the resets yo the sharp of th to make you prom running y they've m precious pictograph to will love that when the and you spre i've seen seen pill seen tau seen flar turn to w left to wh your smi all this m a v angels fo le carve tra licking fr i'll map th so the re
you dream and work so hard i've watched your needles suture your fingers to your tapestries whip-stitched edges of skin dye tethering trails of blood-caked sweaty threads no number of tears could wash out i've turned my hands to the soil lacing my fingers with roots listening for stones that speak our blood and others blood lives there too in the dirt their palms spread toward us fingers curling into fists to fit all of our hearts both our hands so dirty and lovely elbow deep in the mire we carve and sculpt out sanctuaries from cavities in the jaws of waste you with wild piercing metaphor and humor me with what rough service and sweet patience i can muster you staying true to you in the midst of transformation incites me to put myself to the task so much so we'll form the next chrysalis before fully hatching from the last so much so we'll leave so many of our poems unnamed in an attempt to pass them off as merely conversation tho they laugh scream and tremor out of our bones in this world that makes heretics of healers saints of cops and salesmen of presidents (when they aren't busy being butchers) what spaces we save for sweetness is a secret we seem to have but somehow never seem to keep it cuz sweetness depreciates in value	each emerging from our rubble our eyes blaze to the world, "don't speak to me of drought till your tongue has lashed the sky and broke open rain from clouds" our ears filled with the echoes of broken shells whose voices we take to heart you throw your arms out casting seeds you found between their teeth across the field i use my thumb to press them just below the ground tucked in to sleep till some harvest moon the wolves nuzzle you in the alley and protect you from the winter concrete with their fur our eyes howling at moons when our voices are too parched if these folding tenements could speak they would say, "walk on sister whatever doors and windows are not already smashed you may kick down to build a home you've long sought for scaffolded more by who is sitting in the circle rather than any form of architecture are cracks in old paintings the places where the brush hesitated? or are they pockets of scrutiny left from eye born holes? or are they canyons where someone breathed too close and passionately? are they the fissures where life persists to escape		

BECOME A
VENDOR
MAKE MONEY AND HELP
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

EVERYBODY IS A STAR RISING ABOVE THEIR SOCIAL CONDITION

Paul Thomas Jackson

Some homeless man says, “You label me, you negate me,” echoing the premier Existentialist Søren Kierkegaard. He articulates, “You may be tempted to hate me for being homeless and since my life, like yours, is hard.” The sorry fellow can shame as well as fascinate me, recounting the tragic story in which he starred.

The comforting belief you could have picked him in a police lineup isn’t, you know, always true. (Unsure which one he is if circumstances tricked him, But sure he is close and, after all, could be you.) Too many of us are prone to blame the victim if we lack insight and don’t know what to do.

Is anyone an island? Never needing help from someone? “You are never strong enough where you don’t,” said Cesar Chavez, inspiring victories still hard won. For having left someone out, how shall we have atoned? How will we serve so many when we’ve just begun? If we fail to truly live in community, we won’t.

The cards the angels dealt some from the deck left them few choices, incurring homelessness, Like an albatross hanging round their neck. Escape is near impossible and through duress. Tragedy befell them, devouring their paycheck. It left them no pot to piss in, in a mess.

Do you assume they belong in a facility? The call requires professional judgment to meet each one’s needs and respect their autonomy. Underserved today, they face begrudgement. Unsheltered folks, at least the great majority, do as they feel they must in their daily adjustment.

They didn’t set out in life to make such a scandal. The scandal is ours in our homelessness prevention; unwished for while in their mothers’ dandle. “The homeless” didn’t hold a convention wherein they appointed some thief, thug, or vandal to go your alley, biz, or home with evil intention! Like it or not, Fresno isn’t only our but their city. They’re under Nature’s law, elemental curfew. Destitute, they live under forced mobility for lack of dialogue between me and you, steeped in our comforts and individuality but afforded no convenient venue.

They’re also persons under the law of the land, which doesn’t guarantee them living quarters. At some point in their lives, most had early trauma and substance use disorder, factors predisposing one, you’ll understand, to homelessness of the poor lodger or boarder.

“Trust is built on dialogue,” wrote Paulo de Friere, known for the Brazilian students he liberated. Not only is our homeless neighbor a beneficiary but so are we all when dialogue is consecrated, When contributions thereto aren’t extemporaneous but the speakers are well facilitated.

Rights (a liberal mantra) come with responsibility, said the late civil rights activist Maya Angelou who in her life knew triumph and tragedy; and knew that as a basic proposition to pursue through moral dialogue seeking moral clarity how we all shall live in justice by our values.

The man—who, no matter how morally unworthy he’s been, is moving to become better—is a good man, wrote Dewey, known for social philosophy. Homelessness is a nadir in one’s lifespan and not a lens through which to clearly see one’s life, but a community checkup scan.

A city government’s historic role is to “fight crime,” support business, and “make our streets cleaner.” Local government’s proper role in our dialogue is not of commander but of convener: To yield the floor to all except the demagogue, And maintain egalitarian demeanor.

All Fresnans, all who add to our community, Belong to it and deserve housing! Unsheltered people don’t need our pity nor judgment on their carousing. They’re in mortal danger, and so are gritty; and needs more than socks, toothpaste, and delousing.

“The cry of the poor,” said Howard Zinn, “is not always just.” But if you don’t lend an ear, he said you won’t hear justice above the din of the culture war fought less in truth than fear. A chronic substance user is not a libertine but a person whose life is said and austere.

How justice is to be realized in Fresno lies within each community member’s heart. Though many an intellect quickly says no, it’s heard in dialogue in which each takes part, and in which people in homelessness know they’ve been heard on their experiences as smart.

Everybody is a star, and many feel henpecked by four decades of growing homelessness. Neglect of this, as other communities, is the subject. “Never forget that,” declares professor Cornel West, “justice is what love looks like in public.” Does our community pass his Civics test?

after the rest of the lemmings

their eyes poke thru you
the eyes in the back of your head
their cheeks
are full fed on your visions

their breath
tickles your ear
to perk up at the sounds
of the music that will hold
dances that carry this fight forward

their laughter
your gut from its queasy

to surprise
them wrapping round your shin
you stand
in a flash of moment
before they run back into the night

wise not to forget
to hold them close one more time
your fingers

along the exit wounds
made
and yet to make from your body

portals you grow worlds from

oh
to post card
to whatever method
best span love across this distance
fissures space and time

the burning clock
falls off the wall

we’ve already
shed your wings from the windowsill
your punch
rusty nails out
from inside a coffin

pearl chokers
snap and scatter
t ropes fray
and tear from your collar bones

bones
curling up the pyre
willowed smoke
under your feet
whisper in ash

the spread across an ocean
dimples peaking over the horizon

magic you bless
world
that’s shown you little kindness

forged in hell
leave liberatory exit wounds
from their births

ills thru this disintegrating
concrete jungle with your torch
from your lips the leaks
of smoke seared eyes

the echoes
of your footsteps
in the dark

st of us
can find our way home

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STREET
SHEET

WRITING, ARTWORK, PHOTOGRAPHY, POETRY, AND MORE!

Write about your experience 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! Or create art that uplifts homeless people, celebrates the power of community organizing, or calls out abuses of power!

visit www.streetsheet.org/submit-your-writing/
or bring submissions to 280 Turk Street to be considered
Pieces assigned by the editor may offer payment, ask for details!

AMERICAN SPIRIT

Mikey Gallagher

Shiny cherries kindled by traffic
hang off the lip of a drain slit
shattered silver ash wisped
over pinched crimson smirks
achromatic plumes hang
like a lazy hologram
I lit and watched the orange edges split
staring through the haze of exhaust
packing pages into palms
igniting street side fire smiles
crackling chapped lips
reciting wind pipe sidewalks
exhaling bus stops
exiting passengers ask
do you have an extra smoke?
blue box of coffin nails
Native American logo
he presses between his lips
flushes ember glow over dry knuckles
flicks stale whim and grins
on a hand to block the wind
windows glazed with breath
where names drawn with heat melt moments
charred leaf trails stir
our entrances incinerate
like words in the urn
burn into tasteless filter
yellow ochre cuticle
souls like mutilated matchbooks
left for the wind

BETWEEN THE FEATHERS OF THEIR BLACK WINGS

Virgina Barrett

On the rooftop across the way
five crows are meeting. They strut
about against the foggy sky, cawing
and discussing the current state
of affairs. They wonder why humans
suffer so much, hurt so much, destroy
so much. They are aware the remedy
lies somewhere in the love nestled
between the feathers of their black
wings but they are a cranky bunch
and not always willing to share.

Meanwhile, the lemon tree in the yard
between the birds and me offers up
its yellow fruit, the cars stream by
on Guerrero, and this old pole, right
outside my window continues to lean
as if being pulled in a tug-of-war
by the jumble of electric lines it holds
(one side always slightly winning).

Struck by a sudden generosity, one by one
the crows swoop off the roof releasing
their healing wisdom over any passers-by.



im houseless,
but i have a home.

by Joe

a home full of books
a home full of diversity,
yes, im talking about the public library...

everyone is [should be] accepted here,
no matter rich or poor;
yes, it is my home for sure...

you don't even have to be fully sane...
therefore I can call it simply and plain:
"my home!"

I'm not trying to be anything
I'm not trying to do anything.
I am who I am
I am what I am.
And its not always good;
And always not easy.

I sit on the streets all alone
Deep in my thoughts about the days that are gone
A complete stranger – a friend whom I never met,
Walks by;
Put on a smile and says "hi!"
So i think, and ask you:
Is there on earth a more pure and beautiful thing than that?

the world, our world
she is so beautiful
yet, so hypocritical....
there are so many "normal" things here,
that are unbelievably wrong.
it can hardly be justified,
as much as one tried.
but still,
- and some might say therefore
I can surly say:†
the world is so beautiful....

The sky is blue, the grass are green and yellow leaves are flying
around smoothly.
I sit on a bench, smoking and breathing; stare on pedestrians,
and wait...
For what am I waiting?
I don't know.
For whom am I waiting?
I don't know either.
Until when will I be waiting?
I have no clue.
But yet – I sense and feel:
It is good to wait...

Im not very patient
But I must be.
Waiting is essential,
It is the only key...

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JAN 1, 2024

STREET

to know we are alive

Jaz Colibri

to know we are alive
twisted silly angels
bittersweet and charred
perturbed by names given us
which are never truly ours
lives tangled up
in crackling spells cast
by the gossip
of crows
at dawn
sinful, saintly, spirits
stretching our lifespans
within the crisp
receding edges
of a burning cigarette
ashes curl
between the creases
of greasy
obsidian feathers
oddly
stuccoed
together
by
abandoned bits
of
chewing gum
forming haphazard gliders
who won't withstand spreading
too close to the sun
but between
and tide's kisses
moon's gravity
pink
rubber
bubbles
will
be
blown
out
of
our
wings
darting eye trails
draw constellations
between bodies
temporal
taught
star
threads
that attempt
to bridge
the hollows of disconnection
with
daydream figments
of
possibilities for their lives
wandering synapse fires
that
compose soundtracks of their days
mouth sliding
and

some something
folding around
or another
they might say
with
deft
patience
their bodies
in painted fantasy
without ever saying hello
perhaps to compensate
for all the people
who
riddled our bodies
with stories
we could not own
and could never fill
demoned bodies
fiending
to spiral
down
and
out
the
crumbling
fractured
peels
of
an
orange
juicy filaments
torn,
savored,
sucked,
and dissolved
till our guts become spit pits
never to seed
cuz sometimes breathing
feels like drowning
in bodies
that
can never be tamed
that
only ever get to feel alive
in
the
liminal
flickering
of
time-lapsed
flowers
spirits left
honored and helpless
to embody
those spaces
between frames
that the camera never captures
thus we become
the bearers of contradictions
like paradise
can never be built atop tombs
and our bones
cannot line the walls

of the altars
to a new world
cuz our dust
is needed for dancing
to fertilize
and pollinate
the earth
as it churns madly
tearing the pages
of men who speak for gods
who ink our death sentence
drawn on hard lines
bold, fine, and italicized
across the rigid crusty paper
of their exhausted instruction manuals
we are relentlessly
unabridged
with our refusal
to be
annexed and annotated
we become
the birthers of space
for bodies
whose parts
cannot be summed
who know all too well
what it means
to not look suspicious
and exactly how to make
all the right bad decisions
till we dull the spikes
and rust the hinges
of gender's iron maiden
twisted silly angel
when the concepts
of your body
come closing in
know your wild waits for you
crashing between the clack of goats horns
unsheathed and vulnerable
within the bearing of claws
swirling in the breaths
the wind takes to keep going
illuminated in the deaths of firefly sparks
translated by messages
carried on the dances of bees
flicked off tail twitches of squirrels
and rustles of leaves
and
finally
crunched
under our feet
puttering out
and digested
with the nibbling
of a gopher
on a carrot
accepting that we are
the hand, the carrot, and the gopher
we come closer
to knowing our so-called place
if there ever is one
sometimes simple things
like remembering to chew
are all it takes
to feel alive

FOUNDERS

sam palos kraemer

I was raised by wolves
And they never really ever understood me
Lights out, start the film, reel rolling I never
crossed the finish line
But I sprint the first mile
I'm searching for the Easter egg that is joy
Tricky-ass leprechaun that it is
Roll credits

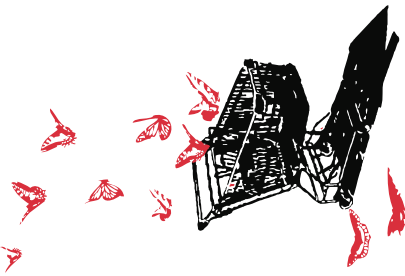
SKYDIVING

sam palos kraemer

Deciding which bad choice to make
Scoffing imperiously
Waving away problems like flies
Gaining altitude
Make it or break it
I close my eyes
And go to my beach
Breathe in the salty air
Dig my toes in the sand

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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:

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