

my body is
trapped in here,
but my heart
is with you
still fighting
out there...

An anatomical illustration of a human heart, showing the major blood vessels and the four chambers. The drawing is in a classic engraved style with fine lines and cross-hatching for shading. Several letters (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I) are placed around the heart, connected to specific parts by thin lines, indicating anatomical labels. The text is written in a bold, black, cursive script over the heart.

**WOMEN'S PRISON
NETWORK**

SPRING 2016: Issue #2

Editor's Note:

Welcome to the second issue of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners.

Its purpose is to be a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, and connections. We strive to send copies to all women's prisons in Canada.

In the next issue there will be a section for pen-pal ads. If you would like to put an Ad in the Summer Issue please send it in, no more than 30 words.

This magazine is sent into women's prisons only!

Please send in your art, poems, short stories and articles to Women's Prison Network if you would like your voice to be part of the next issue.

Women's Prison Network
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

'Women's Prison Network' is produced 4 times per year. It is sent out for free to Women's Prisons in Canada.

If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation !!!

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Publication: Women's Prison Network

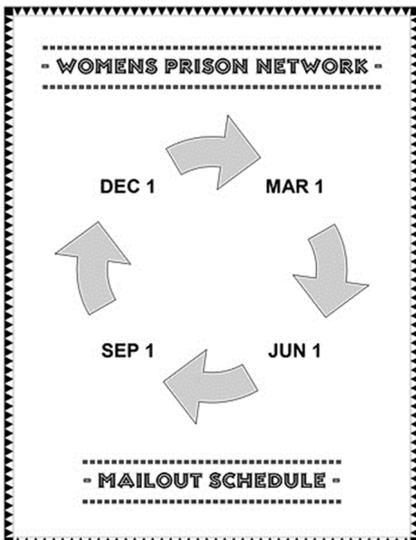
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If you are a woman, youth or trans prisoner and would like to receive a copy of the Women's Prison Network magazine, please write to me so I can send you a copy, also send any feedback on how to improve the paper. Remember this is a magazine by and for you! And please, share this copy!

Cover & Page 3 Art: Marius Mason

Statement from Eco-Prisoner Marius Mason for the Trans Prisoner Day of Action and Solidarity Jan. 22nd 2016

Happy New Year, Family and Friends!

Many, many thanks for so much support and care over this year from both long-standing friends and new pen pals. I feel very grateful and am always humbled by the encouragement and resources sent my way by folks who are doing so much already to increase our collective chances for survival.

The news has been full of stories about someone winning the big money pool that has accumulated for the US Lotto – but the most important “win” has nothing to do with money. I am betting on the movement to win big this year: in getting more control over their communities and defending against police brutality and racial inequality, in winning more victories for animals and in the defense of wild spaces, in creating social relations based on respect, dignity and compassion for all people... regardless of their race, orientation, creed or gender presentation.

Thank you for coming together today, to hold up those members of our community who struggle so hard behind walls to keep their sense of self intact. Sovereignty over our selves, our bodies is essential for any other kind of liberty to be possible.

By reaching out to trans prisoners, you affirm their right to define themselves for themselves – and defend them against the overwhelming voices who claim that they do not exist, that they must allow others to define them.

In the isolating environment of prison, this is toxic and intimidating, and amounts to the cruelest form of psychological torture. By offering your help and solidarity, you may just save a life.

I know that for the last year and a half, as I have struggled to assert myself as a transman, as I have advocated for the relief of appropriate medical care for my gender dysphoria – it has been the gentle and loving reminders of my extended family of supporters who have given me strength and courage to continue.

Please join me in offering this help to so many others who need it to keep going. Never underestimate the healing power of a letter, those letters have kept me going... and I want to pass that gift on, if you will help me.

Thank you again for coming together on this day,

for connecting to those on the inside who truly need you, who need you to see them as they really are and striving to be.

Until the prisons are gone, we need to work hard to support those of us inside – especially those of us who are not always as visible to the rest of the world. We are always stronger together.

Marius Mason
Jan 2016



**Trans
Prisoner
Day of
Action and
Solidarity**

We allow our ignorance to prevail upon us and make us think we can survive alone, alone in patches, alone in groups, alone in races, even alone in genders.

- Maya Angelou

I am in a beautiful prison from which I can only escape by writing.

- Anais Nin



E-Fry Societies denied standing at Sask. inquiry into aboriginal woman's death

Coroner says advocacy group does not have 'substantial interest' in the Kinew James inquiry

A Saskatchewan coroner has refused to allow the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies to participate in the inquest into the controversial death of an aboriginal woman in a federal prison hospital. The inquest into the death of Kinew James is set to begin in January, but the agency, which advocates for female prisoners, has been denied standing by coroner Timothy Hawryluk. In a letter he wrote: "I have concluded that your clients do not have a substantial interest in this inquest It is difficult to identify any circumstances where the jury in this stance would have any recommendations directed to either the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies or EFry Saskatchewan." Hawryluk declined to comment further to CBC News. "This is beyond shocking to us," said Kim Pate, executive director of the association, adding that it's the first time the group has ever been denied standing at an inquest. "Certainly we have a substantial interest in these issues. We're the only organization that works exclusively with women. We go into the prisons on a regular basis. We are some of the first in the prison to meet with the women." Pate said her agency is considering appealing the coroner's decision. James died on Jan. 20, 2013, in the Regional Psychiatric Centre, a prison hospital in Saskatoon. The 35-year-old was from Winnipeg and nearing the end of a 15-year-sentence. She had been transferred to Saskatoon from the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Ontario after speaking out about guards who she said were smuggling in goods in exchange for sexual favours. James, a diabetic, died of an apparent heart attack. Pate said she received several reports from other inmates at the time saying that James had repeatedly pressed her emergency call button for help but was ignored. James was mentally ill and known to act out. In prison she was charged and convicted of acting out and assaulting staff. She had been transferred around the country from one prison to another and spent months at a time in solitary confinement.

Similarities to Ashley Smith?

Don Worme, lawyer for the James family, called it "extraordinary" that the group had been

denied standing. "It's unfortunate. I think the Elizabeth Fry Society is an organization dedicated to standing with marginalized women and would have very important information and insight to be able to bring to this inquest, and I think that decision should be reconsidered." "I expect that it would have something to do with other very high-profile deaths of female prisoners while in federal custody," he said. "I refer specifically to the Ashley Smith inquest and others which have exposed the Correctional Service of Canada to some very serious shortcomings in terms of how to deal with female prisoners." Smith and James served time together. The Elizabeth Fry Societies had been the driving force behind exposing the conditions that led to the 2007 death of Ashley Smith. The 19-year-old choked herself to death in the Grand Valley Institution for Women near Kitchener, Ont., while guards stood outside her cell and watched. The lengthy inquest into Smith's death resulted in 104 recommendations, many concerning the treatment of inmates who are mentally ill.

Calls continue for Nova Scotia inquiry

In the meantime, calls are continuing for a public inquiry into the suspicious deaths of two other female inmates from Newfoundland and Labrador at Nova Institution, a federal prison in Nova Scotia. Veronica Park died in April and Camille Strickland-Murphy took her own life in July. The families of both women are demanding answers about the quality of health care the women received. Marian Mancini, a member of the Nova Scotia Legislature and NDP justice critic, is among those calling for an inquiry. "I really want to know what services are being provided at Nova. I want to know and the families want to know what kind of attention was being paid to their health issues and what kind of treatment they were getting," she said. So far the Nova Scotia government has refused to hold an inquiry. "Clearly we have at least three deaths where the authorities seem to be resisting intervening or exposing what happened to these women," said Pate, of the Elizabeth Fry Societies. "There certainly seems to be people sticking their heads in the sand perhaps hoping this will all go away.

Maureen Brosnahan
CBC News
Nov 26, 2015

B.C. Updates Placement Policy for Transgender Inmates

Transgender inmates in British Columbia will now be placed and managed according to their gender identities with the implementation of a new policy that advocates are calling among the best in the world. The policy announced by the provincial government this week replaces one that, among other things, placed transgender inmates according to their birth sex rather than the gender with which they identify unless they had undergone sexual reassignment surgery. It makes British Columbia the second province, after Ontario, to adopt such a policy for all its correctional facilities. Prisoners' rights and LGBTQ advocates had said the old policy put transgender inmates at risk of sexual harassment and assault and violated their human rights. The policy change was prompted by inmate Bianca Sawyer, who contacted Prisoners' Legal Services (PLS) while imprisoned at Kamloops Regional Correctional Centre in September. Ms. Sawyer, who was born Jaris Lovado and identifies as transgender, said in an interview that she had been in and out of men's corrections facilities for more than a decade - for crimes ranging from robberies to breaches of probation - and experienced countless indignities such as using a toilet in front of a male inmate and being strip-searched by male staff. When she overheard officers making lewd jokes about her, she had finally had enough. "A group of, like, eight or nine officers were joking about how it would feel to get oral sex from me, and running their hands through my short hair [and making] jokes about me growing breasts," she said. "I was really upset. That night, I was like, 'I don't belong here.'" PLS contacted BC Corrections and a new policy was drafted. In an interview, PLS executive director Jennifer Metcalfe praised the leadership at BC Corrections and heralded the new policy as the best example of any jurisdiction in the world. "You can imagine what it would be like to be a woman living in a men's prison: You might be forced to double-bunk with a man, you might be at risk of sexual violence ... you would be living in fear on a daily basis," she said. "Having your gender affirmed by being able to live in a women's prison is very important just on a basic human rights level." Ms. Sawyer was moved to Alouette Correctional Centre for Women in

Maple Ridge, B.C. Under the new policy, exceptions can be made if there are "overriding health and/or safety concerns which cannot be resolved." Transgender inmates who are housed according to their birth sex are not required to share a cell. In January, Ontario's Correctional Services Minister announced that transgender inmates would be treated according to their gender identities rather than physical traits. A policy on the Correctional Service Canada website says inmates in federal prisons with gender dysphoria will be referred to a psychiatrist and can be considered for hormone therapy or surgery. However, it says inmates will be placed according to their biological sex. "Pre-operative male to female offenders with gender dysphoria will be held in men's institutions and pre-operative female to male offenders with gender dysphoria will be held in women's institutions," the policy says. Among other updates to British Columbia's policy, transgender inmates will have individual and private access to the shower and toilet; be referred to by their preferred names and gender pronouns; and be permitted personal effects to express their gender. (such as certain institutional clothing and canteen items). In an interview, B.C. Justice Minister Suzanne Anton said Ms. Sawyer is the first inmate in British Columbia affected by the new policy. She did not know if any other moves are planned. The Ministry of Justice does not track the number of inmates who identify as transgender. Ontario had 25 inmates in 2014 who self-identified as transgender, according to the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Adrienne Smith, a health and drug policy lawyer with the Pivot Legal Society is pleased that the new policy addresses a historical wrong that exposed transgender people to harm. However, much is still to be done to address why transgender people are disproportionately in the criminal justice system, the lawyer said. "It's time that there is explicit protection for trans people in provincial and federal human rights codes and that the Criminal Code is amended so that hate crimes can be more easily prosecuted. Trans people disproportionately face violence and commonplace discrimination in housing, employment."

Andrea Woo
Globe and Mail - Nov 24, 2015

Women in Sask. jail complain of 'mystery meat' from new food provider

Complaint about Pine Grove food similar to concerns raised at Regina jail

A letter purportedly from inmates at a women's correctional facility in Saskatchewan notes complaints about the quality of food including questions about "mystery meat" that some inmates were not able to identify.

The letter, which was not dated, was provided to news media Friday by an advocacy group, the Elizabeth Fry Society, which received the unsigned letter in January.

The food complaints are similar to concerns raised by inmates at the Regina correctional centre, who have repeatedly refused to eat in recent weeks.

"We have been served food that is uncooked, leftovers from days before and mystery meat," the letter from women inmates said.

Pine Grove is a provincial correctional centre for women in Prince Albert, Sask.

"They're writing on behalf of the women who are incarcerated," Sue Delaney, executive director of the society, told CBC News. "Specifically they have complaints [regarding] women with special diets and pregnant women."

The Saskatchewan government hired a private company to provide food services at its correctional facilities, a move aimed at reducing costs.

"We hear complaints on a regular basis," Delaney said. "I would also challenge our government to think twice about the privatisation of prison food because it doesn't always deliver the cost savings that I think politicians seem to expect."

Delaney added that the quality of food in prison also affects the mood of the institution.

"[There is a] real connection between food related problems and institutional unrest," she said. "It really needs to be a core function in our correctional system to have decent food services that can provide skills and training to the inmates."

CBC News
Jan 08, 2016

Prisons Face Hep C Treatment Crisis

Policy at Correctional Services Canada may be failing to limit the spread of hepatitis C in prisons. Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) could face a funding shortfall of up to \$100 million if it adheres to a new standard of care that would see federal inmates infected with hepatitis C prescribed a new and expensive drug. Internal government reports, released to CMAJ under the federal access to information law and reviewed by four external experts, appear to indicate that CSC may be delaying treatment for as many as 1750 infected federal inmates. CSC recently released the heavily censored reports to CMAJ, almost ten months past the deadline stipulated under the federal information law.

The funding shortfall is underpinned both by CSC's standard-of-care requirement to use the costly new drugs and a dramatic expansion in the number of inmates potentially treatable with these new drugs, which are better tolerated and more efficacious than the drugs CSC previously used. In 2014, CSC spent \$4 million to treat about 240 patients with older and cheaper drugs. The new medication will more than triple treatment the cost for the same number of inmates, according to a forecast prepared by Henry deSouza, CSC's director general of clinical services and public health, in September 2014.

That translates into a cost of as much as \$15 million annually for those 240 patients, the CSC told CMAJ. "CSC is currently assessing options to address this financial pressure," stated spokeswoman Lori Halfper in an email. But this number may severely understate the actual cost that CSC faces, say experts who reviewed the data CSC released to CMAJ. That's because new guidelines published last year by the Canadian Association for the Study of the Liver (CASL) recommend that "All patients with chronic [hepatitis C virus] infection should be considered candidates for antiviral therapy," explains Dr. Peter Ford, a physician who treats patients with HIV and hepatitis C in federal prisons in Ontario. The CASL guidelines were subsequently endorsed by the federal Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health in December and by Quebec in July. To adhere to those guidelines, CSC will have to vastly expand the number of inmates it considers for treatment, Ford says. CSC estimates that 2500 inmates are

infected, he notes. As of 2016, according to CSC, the 12-week treatment per patient using the combination therapy Harvoni will average \$67 000. At that price, following CASL clinical guidelines will result in a CSC funding shortfall of well over \$100 million. CSC Health Services is planning a consultation meeting in early 2016 "with all medical specialists treating CSC offenders with hepatitis C," says Jon Schofield, a communications advisor for CSC. The CSC acknowledged in an analysis given to CMAJ that "The number eligible for treatment is larger than the old therapy." In recent years about 70% of infected inmates have been advised by specialists to "wait for a new generation of treatment." In Ontario, where about 30% of federal inmates are incarcerated, CSC estimates that as many as 884 patients await treatment. Dr. Fiona Kouyoumdjian of St. Michael's Hospital, Centre for Research on Inner City Health in Toronto notes that the very small proportion of inmates currently being treated "raises the question of whether health care is meeting professionally accepted standards, as required by the Corrections and Conditional Release Act."

Kouyoumdjian, and Glenn Betteridge and Adam Cook of the Toronto-based Canadian Treatment Action Council, concur with Ford's view that the CASL guidelines compel the CSC to dramatically expand the number of inmates it considers for treatment. CSC's "Cost Containment Plan," which appears to be based on a hard cap of 240 prisoners treated per year," is much more restrictive than the approach taken by public drug programs in the community, under which everyone who meets the eligible criteria for hep C drugs can access them," says Betteridge, a lawyer and CTAC policy researcher.

"Restrictions on treatment according to disease stage are no longer tenable for many people living with chronic hep C," says Betteridge. "CSC should get moving and develop an implementation plan to provide the highest standard of care to all prisoners rather than engaging in cost-containment planning and arbitrary rationing of treatment driven by untenably small budgets." While noting that intravenous drug use is rampant in federal prisons, and needle exchanges forbidden for almost a decade, Ford warns that CSC is "doing little to prevent the spread of hepatitis C within the institutions. Hepatitis C in prisons is a major

public health issue because people continue to get infected in prison - even CSC admits this - and they will go out and spread the disease."

"Prison represents an important, and often the only, opportunity to treat a significant proportion of hep C positive individuals," Ford says. "What is needed is for CSC to start behaving in a responsible manner, which includes openness rather than secrecy and a willingness to take outside advice about both treatment and prevention. Also there needs to be a significant input of government money not just for drugs, but also to increase the inadequate levels of staffing."

Paul Webster
CMAJ, Toronto
Jan 14, 2016



To eat bread without hope is still slowly to starve to death.

- Pearl S. Buck

You can't turn back the clock. But you can wind it up again.

- Bonnie Prudden

You can stand tall without standing on someone. You can be a victor without having victims.

- Harriet Woods

Four Fixes for Canada's Broken Justice System

There is no need for the scare tactics and simple meanness we experienced under the previous government. The new federal government has a full legislative agenda even before it looks at the chaos created by the Harper government in the criminal justice system. Justice policy is all about values; there's truth in the oft-quoted observation of the 35-year-old Winston Churchill: "The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilization of any country." Like many countries - notably the U.S. - Canada has not always received a clear "pass" on Churchill's civilization test. However, until 2006, even if we sometimes failed to live up to our aspirations, we at least talked a good talk about the justice system's goals and operation. But that changed in 2006 when rhetoric about criminal justice became not only rejecting of many Canadians, but decidedly nasty. Even the U.S. has realized that high imprisonment rates - especially of minor offenders - serve nobody and is shifting its orientation accordingly. Yet the previous federal government not only insisted on pursuing the same path the U.S. is now abandoning, but also sowed fear and division in an attempt to justify these misguided policies. Change in both the direction and tone of Canada's criminal justice policy is necessary. To bring our justice system more in line with Canadian values will take both time and effort. However, there are important steps the new government can take now. First, remove the handcuffs from judges and let them do the job they are paid to do: judge. One Criminal Code amendment can undo the worst of the mandatory measures that have eliminated judicial discretion and thereby reduced public safety. It could provide that, notwithstanding any other provisions, a judge may impose something other than the mandatory measure. Judges could be required to state in open court what the compelling reasons were for their decisions. Second, the most serious contributor to overcrowding in provincial/territorial prisons is the growth in the number of remand prisoners - most of whom are still legally innocent. Fifty-four per cent of the prisoners in provincial/territorial prisons aren't serving sentences. The Conservatives did nothing to address this problem;

Ottawa needs to work with the provinces to fix it. The federal government should show leadership and start that work immediately.

Third, repeal the most egregious government-supported private member's bills controlling release from penitentiary. One of these bills restricted many prisoners to a single application for supervised reintegration into the community. If unsuccessful, those prisoners most in need of supervision and support would get the least of it. The evidence is clear: people released "cold" from prison cells to the street reoffend at a higher rate than those released with support and supervision. Fourth, refocus tax dollars on high-risk offenders, and stop wasting money on those who are low-risk. For example, currently everyone released on day parole must live in halfway houses for six months (or three years for those serving life sentences), regardless of whether they are homeless or have a home to go to. One white-collar, first-time, low-risk offender parked his white Mercedes in front of the halfway house he was assigned to every night for six months while he slept there. He spent the daytime at his home. Taxpayers paid for that bed (for 180 nights) and it was unavailable for prisoners whose reoffending could be reduced by this form of supervised release. These changes could be made easily without taking much parliamentary time. Simultaneously, however, the government could convene a group to reflect on the fundamental principles of Canadian justice that should guide our way ahead. This should involve parliamentarians as well as the public and groups with an interest in our justice system. Such a project was last undertaken in 1982. One counterproductive aspect of the recent past has been that, though we have a substantial body of evidence about what works and produces better public safety, we have consistently ignored it. Once we've done the work of determining the modern principles by which our justice system should function, we should look to the evidence. There is no need for the scare tactics and simple meanness we experienced under the previous government. Canadians understand accountability, fairness, compassion, and mercy and are looking for sensible criminal justice policies based on the best available information. Let's show the world that we are indeed back.

R. McMurtry, Mary Campbell, Anthony Doob
Toronto Star - Dec 04, 2015

Teen Inmate Suing B.C. over Alleged Solitary Confinement

A British Columbia teen who says he was held in solitary confinement for four months has filed a lawsuit against the provincial government, the latest in a flurry of suits involving the practice in Canada.

The legal challenges come as critics call solitary confinement cruel and harmful, and argue it increases inmates' suffering. The use of solitary confinement has been on the rise in Canada, even as jurisdictions such as the United States and Britain have scaled back its use.

The teen, who is not identified in the notice of civil claim, filed his lawsuit this week in B.C. Supreme Court. The lawsuit says he suffers from both an intellectual impairment and a severe behavioural disorder. It says he was involved in an altercation with a correctional officer in November, 2014, and was subjected to solitary confinement until March. He was 17 at the time. "This is the last person you want to be putting in solitary confinement, and the fact that it was so lengthy exacerbates a problematic situation," Christopher Terepocki, the teen's lawyer, said in an interview Wednesday.

The Globe has exposed widespread problems with solitary confinement, including the suicide of Eddie Snowshoe after 162 consecutive days in segregation.

A \$125-million class-action lawsuit was filed earlier this month against the Ontario government over its use of solitary confinement for youth.

The lawsuit alleges the province's youth-justice centres regularly violate policies meant to limit the use and duration of solitary confinement.

Earlier this year, the B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the John Howard Society of Canada sued the federal government over the use of solitary confinement in prisons.

Though the former Conservative government defended the practice, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau last week directed his Justice Minister to implement recommendations from an Ontario coroner's inquest into the 2007 death of teenager Ashley Smith that would ban long-term solitary confinement for federal inmates.

B.C.'s Ministry of Children and Family Development, which operates the Burnaby Youth Custody Services Centre where the teen was

held, said it would not comment on the lawsuit because the matter is before the courts.

In a statement, however, a ministry spokesperson wrote that "separate confinement arrangements" are made for youth at custody centres "on very rare occasions."

"These rare circumstances are continuously reviewed to assess when it is safe, and in the youth's interest, to be reintegrated with other youth," the statement read.

The statement did not answer a question on how many B.C. youth had been placed in solitary confinement.

The lawsuit says the teen was moved to a separate confinement unit immediately after the altercation with the correctional officer for the maximum allowable period of 72 hours. However, the lawsuit says, rather than release the teen back to his former living area, centre staff sent him to a different unit where he lived alone.

The lawsuit says B.C.'s ombuds-person expressed concern about the situation about two months after the solitary confinement began. It says that while centre staff then agreed to let the teen contact a social worker, it was another two months before he was permitted to again reside with other youth.

The teen is charged with second-degree murder, attempted murder and firearms offences. A trial date has not been set. He has since been transferred to Surrey Pretrial Services Centre, an adult facility. The teen, who recently turned 18, is a refugee from South Sudan.

Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, B.C.'s children's representative, said in an interview that she is familiar with the teen. Generally, she said, it should be policy to never use solitary confinement for youth.

"The evidence is very strong that using isolation, using separation, over a long period of time – more than a short de-escalation period – is not helpful for young people," she said.

Ms. Turpel-Lafond said greater mental-health supports for in-custody youth are needed.

"They came through the criminal justice door, but that is because they are in very rough shape, and we don't want them to come out that criminal justice door in worse shape," she said.

Sunny Dhillon
Globe and Mail - Nov 25, 2015

POEMSPÖEMSPÖEMSPÖEMSPÖE**God's Plan for Me**

My life of physical & emotional pain
 is my shepherd
 I am in want
 It doesn't let me rest in green pastures
 It leads me beside troubled waters
 It takes my emotional strength away
 It guides me along wrong paths
 Bringing my life to ruins
 So I walk through the valley of death & fear evil
 Because of my fate
 Its rod & staff abuse me
 It prepares a feast for my enemies
 My cup is empty
 Surely pain & suffering will follow me
 All the days of my life
 Then live with the damned
 Hell when I die forever

- Krista Walker

O Fool I Am

O fool I am
 O fool I'll be
 But I'll not let
 The cruel world see me
 For I shall hide
 The way I feel
 Just as an orange
 By its peel

- Helenann Young

Dreams

I love to dream
 For when I do
 I'm sure to dream
 Of only you
 In my dreams
 There is so much
 Your lips to kiss
 Your body to touch
 But when I awake
 It's sadness I feel
 For all I've touched
 Was not real

- Anne Boardmore

MSPÖEMSPÖEMSPÖEMSPÖEMS**Criminal Mind**

A criminal mind, it's all I've ever known
 Even as a child, now I'm full grown
 Drugs & guns and the gangsters with them
 That's how I was introduced to the system
 Now I'm here to pay for my crime
 The only way I can pay is by doin' time
 In and out and back again
 When will it stop, when will it end?
 Drugs, guns & money, the gangster lifestyle
 I still wanna be a thug for just a little while
 No one can touch me, I think I'm 'all that'
 Soon I'm a mouse being chased by a cat
 The Po-Po comes when I'm so unaware
 When they finally catch me, I don't even care
 Back to the place from where I came
 My criminal mind turns this into a game
 Courts, lawyers, judge and jury
 Sentence me NOW, I'm in a big hurry
 To once again, start doing time
 It only contributes to my criminal mind

- Theresa Pasquino

Two Are Better Than One

When working together in tandem
 Two are better than one
 The job is a lot easier
 And the quicker it gets done
 And when one stumbles & falls
 The other can reach out a hand
 To help comfort & ease the pain
 Till back on his feet he can stand
 And at the darkest hour of night
 Two are better than one
 To keep each other cozy & warm
 Until the rising sun
 And if two are apprehended
 They're more powerful than one
 They can protect & defend
 And put evil on the run
 There's nothing like the camaraderie
 The companionship, togetherness & fun
 A threefold cord is not easily broken
 And two are better than one

- Vanessa Micek

POEMSPÖEMSPÖEMSPÖEMSPÖE**Thoughts**

In your thoughts
 If you can't face the truth
 You'll run away from it, you'll see
 Reality composed in your mind
 Just a fantasy of me in vision left behind
 So lovely, so sweet
 Dreams is what you'll meet
 Something so good bound to lift me off of my feet
 For you I'll leave behind
 Something called heartache just this one time
 This is near to wreck your mind
 That's the way I like it
 I'll be much happier, you'll see
 This time I'll be laughing hysterically
 Because it wasn't me

- Nicole Miller

My Second Chance

Before I didn't even know me
 Always drunk & too blind to see
 Now here I sit in a cell
 A prisoner of my own hell
 I was full of anger & denial
 The judge of my own trial
 Didn't realize all the hurts I had
 I thought, fuck it & stayed mad
 Here I sit at GVI pen
 Looking at women who will sit here
 For the next ten
 I realized I had changes to make
 I now see the new road of life I have to take
 This would be my ultimate test
 See if I can put those hurts to rest
 I'm determined & very prepared
 All my life I didn't realize that people really cared
 Family, staff, inmates & friends
 All helping my heart slowly mend
 I'm glad I opened my eyes & seen
 How deep, broken & confused I had been
 I finally have the ability to go forward
 A future to which I look toward
 Today I can proudly say
 From here on out, nothing will stand in my way

- Michelle Richer

MSPÖEMSPÖEMSPÖEMSPÖEMSP**Growing Up**

Where does a child go for help
 When nobody seems to care
 What does a child eat
 When nobody's there to cook
 Where does a child get a hug
 When nobody's there to hug
 When does a child get love
 When nobody's there to love
 When does a child learn
 When nobody's there to teach
 When does a child feel safe
 When nobody's there to protect
 Where does a child end up?
 A grown woman's always locked up!

- Angel Fillimchuck

**I Believe**

I believe you can find love after death
 A mother's love is unconditional
 Lifers can feel freedom again
 Never ever rat 2 get ahead
 Move to another city
 Where you don't know anybody
 Or your way around
 Start new
 Laugh at yourself
 Always give back to the hood

- Tania Ross

0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EM**SPOEMSP0EMSP0EMSP0EMSP0****Comfortably Numb**

I can have moments of serenity
 Sometimes even a glimmer of hope
 But when the past or my issues creep up on me
 It can take a lot to hold on & cope
 I feel like the depths of my hell
 Have my feelings entwined in flames
 I hate all the turmoil, some days I feel totally
 insane
 My yesterdays cripple me, my emotions
 I switch to numb
 I reach out to my drug of choice,
 It makes me 'comfortably numb'
 But the jazz ain't that jazzy no more
 Nothing pretty when you're hitting the floor
 Taking me to scary places
 Trying to numb all the pain I've endured
 It used to be a beautiful thing
 My comforter, my Calgon
 Makes me comfortably numb
 My addiction takes over me
 Every time it's won
 I am tired of the hustle
 I am tired of waking up sick
 I am tired of that whole damn trip
 I need to despise it
 It has taken a lot for me to take these steps
 To be able to write this today
 Three weeks since I've been in my numb state
 Being a junkie, I know deep inside,
 It is not my fate
 I am starting to feel now, it's scary
 But overdosing is scarier
 I believe we all have a purpose in life
 I just needed to step out of my haze
 And none of it would be even possible
 If I didn't have my creator above
 - Rebecca Reid

Someone

There's someone, somewhere
 Who thinks of your smile
 Who finds in your presence
 That life is worthwhile
 So when you're alone in your cell
 Remember it's true, there's someone
 Somewhere, who's thinking of you

- Allana Custer

A Part of Me

When I was younger
 I grew up in a white home
 Where I felt so alone
 I knew I was different
 Cuz I didn't look like anyone
 I was told when I was a small child
 I poured baby powder on my brown skin
 Just to fit in
 My parents didn't have friends
 That were a different race
 And I always felt out of place
 I don't understand why no one
 Would play with me
 Eventually even the bullies let me be
 My sisters & brothers were ashamed of me
 Cuz I was ½ black & ½ Cree
 Back then it was looked down
 To be a person who was brown
 It wasn't until I had my first son
 That I finally loved who I was
 Cuz you see
 He was brown just like me
 I'm proud that I'm ½ native & ½ black
 And that's a fact!
 If it wasn't for people's love
 And acceptance of me
 I'd be locked up emotionally
 And not be free

- Joyce Weiman

Dawn

Seems like I'm always waiting for morning to
 come
 Where the serenity of twilight
 Hovers before the dawn
 It's such an amazingly heavenly place
 The illuminated blue/grey screen
 That is the skyline above the trees
 Anticipates dissipation
 Booming silence is shattered by the faint
 Distant dulcet of a swallow
 And the seemingly timelessness bred dread
 That dawn marks the beginning of another
 Sentence day

- Wendy de Bruin

Federal Incarceration by the numbers

\$322 - average daily cost of a prisoner in a penitentiary in 2011-12 (\$221 in 2001-02)
 \$117,788 - average annual cost of a prisoner in a prison in 2011-12
 \$151,484 - annual cost of a prisoner in max.
 \$104,889 - annual cost of a prisoner in med.
 \$91,959 - annual cost of a prisoner in min.
 7,695 - number of corrections officers in Federal prisons
 \$78.76 - amount paid per Canadian, per year, to fund the Federal prison system

Prisoner Profile

Number of prisoners in Federal prisons:

2013: 14,745

2002: 12,663

Age of inmates:

18-29: 40.5%

30s: 27.5%

40s: 19.4%

50-69: 11.7%

70+: 0.8%

2,823 incarcerated for murder

479 dangerous offenders serving indefinite sentences

Race:

58% of inmates are white

23% are aboriginal

Religion:

36% are Catholic

15% are Protestants

5% are Muslims

Source: Correction Service Canada

There are two ways of meeting difficulties.
 You alter the difficulties or you alter yourself
 to meet them.

- Phyllis Bottome

I am not eccentric. It's just that I am more
 alive than most people. I am an unpopular
 electric eel set in a pond of goldfish.

- Edith Sitwell

If you obey all the rules, you miss all the fun.

- Katherine Hepburn

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

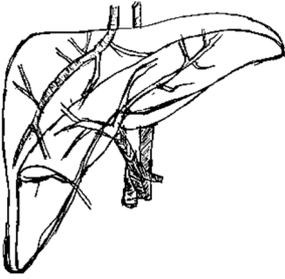
In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.



Hep C & Eating Well Inside

Your liver is your body's processing and powerplant - everything you consume filters through it. If you have hep C, eating well can slow its progression in your liver.

We have some general tips on healthy eating for hep C inside. A diet low in fat, sugar, cholesterol, and sodium, but high in complex carbohydrates and sufficient protein is recommended.

- If you can, talk to health care and see if you qualify for a low-fat, low-cholesterol, or high-protein diet.
- Order peanut butter or protein bars from canteen. Watch your protein bar intake as they often contain lots of processed sugar.
- Eat protein like meats, peanut butter, beans, nuts, and cheese. Your body needs protein to fight infection and heal damaged liver cells. Protein helps you build and maintain muscle. Eat high-fat protein sources like meat, peanut butter and cheese in moderation.
- Eat carbohydrates. You need carbs to give you energy. Try to avoid high-sugar foods like candy, and go for complex carbs like pasta, potatoes, bread, fruits & vegetables.
- Eat all your vegetables - whatever you can get. You get vital nutrients from fruits and vegetables. Drink water. Coffee and cola can dehydrate you. Flush your system with some water.
- Cut back on fatty and salty foods if you can, including deep-fried foods. They make your liver work overtime.
- Cut down or stop drinking. Alcohol is very hard on your liver.
- Try to exercise a bit every day. Walk or jog around the yard. Lift weights to keep your muscles strong or get the blood flowing with push-ups and sit-ups.
- Watch your health. Put in a health care request if you get swelling or pain in the right side of your torso.
- Educate yourself about hepatitis C.

* If you have advanced liver disease or another condition like diabetes that requires a special diet, try to talk to a health professional before making changes to your diet.

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Harvoni: \$60,000 for 8 weeks (Genotype 1, low viral load, never-treated)

Harvoni: \$90,000 for 12 weeks (Genotype 1)

Sovaldi: \$55,000+ perhaps with other drugs for Genotypes other than Genotype 1

Federal Prison: you may be able to start your treatment while inside.

Provincial Prisons: Depending on the province, you may have to wait till you get out.

When released, get right on welfare or disability. Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.

Go to a Clinic and get your blood work done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

Important: most prisons, provincial drug plans, and private plans restrict the new drugs to people who have chronic hep C plus scarring of the liver (stage F2 or higher fibrosis). Both never-treated & people for whom Peg-Interferon & Ribavarin did not work are eligible for the newer treatments. For people with hep C and no liver scarring or light scarring (less than F2 fibrosis), it's still Peg-Interferon & Ribavarin. Get your liver tested! New tests have replaced biopsies: Fibre-test (blood) & Fibro-test (imaging).

Ontario Government Sued for putting Youth in Solitary Confinement

Seeking an end to solitary confinement for juvenile criminals, lawyers filed a class-action lawsuit Wednesday against the Ontario government, saying the practice is always cruel and harmful.

The \$125-million lawsuit is the latest in a growing legal fight against the practice of segregation in Canada. It alleges that youth-justice centres regularly violate Ontario policies meant to limit the use and duration of solitary, and advocates to give youths access to legal help to stay out of segregation. It also says children as young as 12 are being placed in solitary.

Solitary “will always fly in the face of the purpose of youth justice, which is to rehabilitate children,” James Sayce, a Toronto lawyer who is involved in the lawsuit, said in an interview.

The lawsuit was filed in the name of John Doe, who was incarcerated at the Genest Detention Centre for Youth in London. The suit says he was regularly subjected to long periods of solitary confinement. It does not say how long, when or at what age he was incarcerated. (It also does not say what the teenager was convicted of, or give his current age or any details about him, and Mr. Sayce cited youth-justice confidentiality laws in declining to elaborate.)

A report in August from Irwin Elman, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, found that 164 young people in Ontario were placed in solitary (known as “secure isolation” in Ontario) for longer than 24 hours; 38 were for longer than 72 hours and 13 lasted more than five days. In rare cases, youths spent more than 15 days in the isolated cells.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, which oversees youth detention centres, said that the department’s top priority is “the safety and well-being of all who work and reside in youth justice facilities,” and that the use of secure isolation in youth facilities is declining. The spokesperson said the department would not comment directly on the allegations raised in the lawsuit, saying that it would be inappropriate to comment on a matter that may come before a court. She also said that, since 2003, youth crime has dropped 46 per cent and custody admissions have fallen 72 per cent.

The case follows a lawsuit brought in January by the B.C. Civil Liberties Association and the John Howard Society alleging that the federal government’s use of solitary confinement leads to the deaths of prisoners, discriminates against mentally ill and aboriginal inmates and is unconstitutional. Mr. Sayce filed a separate class-action lawsuit in Ontario in July, saying the federal use of solitary violates the rights of the mentally ill. The federal government has kept the practice in widespread use, with some changes in response to the 2007 death of Ashley Smith, who at age 19 had spent nearly a year in solitary before dying from self-inflicted strangulation.

Under Ontario law, solitary is to be used only when a youth is expected to cause imminent property damage or serious harm to another person, and when no less restrictive means of restraint is available. Once the crisis is over, the confinement in solitary is to end. Maximum stay for those under 16 is set at eight hours in a day, or 24 hours in a week; those over 16 can be held for three days straight, or longer if a provincial director approves. And the youths must be advised of their right to talk to the Provincial Advocate or a lawyer when placed in solitary.

The class-action lawsuit claims that the government regularly violates those rules – youths are placed in solitary when they are no threat to others or to property; they remain in solitary long after crises pass; those under 16 are regularly held more than eight hours a day or 24 hours a week; and youths are not advised of their right to legal assistance when in solitary.

“Time passes more slowly for children, and solitary confinement impacts brain structure, development and long-term function,” the lawsuit says, citing the United Nations’ 1990 rules for incarcerated juveniles and a 2011 report from the UN’s Special Rapporteur on torture, both of which bar the use of solitary confinement for youth.

Last year, the Rikers Island prison complex in New York City - the second-largest prison in the United States - announced it was banning solitary confinement for juvenile inmates.

Sean Fine
Globe and Mail
Nov 04, 2015

Women's Prison Network Spring 2016 - Issue #2

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Please send in your work
before May 1, 2016
Summer Issue #3 is sent
out June 1, 2016



F.E.A.T. - Family Visitation

F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

F.E.A.T.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones. During our trips, F.E.A.T provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies. Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email F.E.A.T. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid by email at info@featforchildren.org or by phone at 416-505-5333.

Prison Radio

- Montreal - CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS - 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph - CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio - Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver - CO-OP 100.5 FM
Stark Raven - 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston - CFRC 101.9 FM
Prison Radio - Wed 7-8 pm

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

*Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall,
Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message
or music request to be broadcast on-air.*
