

The Best of Poetry by the Children of Hill Country Youth Ranch

Written between 1990 & 2005



We invite Songwriters to use the words our children so lovingly expressed as inspiration for your own creation, sharing credit with the child, elevating their words to another creative level. Over thirty years we have produced three albums of songs including many collaborations between artists and Ranch children. Please read through their poems . . . you might find something that inspires you. If you're interested in contributing to our Children's Music Project please contact us for more information on how to proceed at info@youth-ranch.org

Poems from the Children of
Hill Country Youth Ranch
Written during the years 1990 – 2005

Within each child

lies a miracle waiting to emerge . . .

Because of histories of deprivation and abuse,
many of our children have never had the opportunity
to receive these miracles.

So, when each child comes to us
it is our prayer that we will be able to help that child
find expression, discover gifts and talents . . .
and slowly bloom into the person
that God meant him or her to be.

The works in this collection
have been written by children
living at HCYR between 1990 and 2005.

Hill Country Youth Ranch

A not for profit home for
Neglected and abused children
Of all ages
Providing Christian guidance
Vocational training
Personal enrichment
Counseling services
Sports, horsemanship training
Nature awareness
Theater and graphic arts
And so much more
For those who need it most.

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Chris age 15

GRANDPA 'S HANDS

Grandpa 's hands

were big and strong...

They punished me

When I did something wrong.

Grandpa was big and tall...

And a few times,

Because of him,

I kissed a wall.

He was so close,

and dear to me...

HIS LOVE WAS SO BLINDING

THAT I DIDN 'T WANT TO SEE...

He told me that what it did was okay...

Then he went on and on

day after day.

I loved him so much

I didn 't want to tell...

If I did, he said

I would go to hell.

On the day he died,

I just

cried and cried and cried.

Nine years ago to the day

was when he took his love away.

After his death

I didn 't know what to do...

Because he was still

the greatest man I ever knew.

A TEEN 'S PRAYER

Please Lord,

Give me the strength

To go through life..

Lord, please help me

As I travel down

These paths I have chosen.

Let all fears be shed

From the minds of my fellow man.

Lord, I ask that You also

Relieve my fears...

Fears that have been placed there

By others.

Give us Lord,

Your guidance and protection

As we face troubled times.

And watch over us, Lord

As we grow up

To be part of Your Kingdom,

And then finally,

Your angels.

Until the day

That I can be safe

In the bosom of Your love,

Watch out for me, and my fellow man . . .

THE TRUTH

I thought my mother would always

Be there for me

I loved her so much that I couldn 't see...

THE TRUTH

The truth was that she didn 't want me

That she never loved me

She just let me...be.

Chris age 15

IN THE END, IT WILL BE HIM WHO WINS

The world I ' m growing up in-it ' s becoming a living hell.

Homicide, hate, smack, crack, coke,

This is today ' s world; not some kind of joke.

IN THE END, IT WILL BE HIM WHO WINS

Bombs, guns, chemical weapons all made to destroy and kill

All give people false power- and now they think they will

Win . . . No matter what or who gets in their way...

BUT IN THE END IT WILL BE HIM WHO WINS

No matter what you do, if you ' re bad or if you ' re good,

You will be tried by God

And I ' ll tell you again . . . He will win...

Murder and lying are getting way way out of hand.

People killing each other over money words and land.

One thinks he ' s the winner when the other is dead...

THINK AGAIN . . .

IN THE END IT WILL BE HIM WHO WINS.

Parents killing kids, committing unspeakable deeds...

When the police say in desperation that there are no leads,

They may think they have won, but God knows all sins

AND IN THE END IT WILL BE HIM WHO WINS.

YES, IT WILL BE HIM WHO WINS...

NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, BAD OR GOOD,

YOU WILL BE TRIED BY HIM,

AND HE WILL WIN!

IF YOU WANT TO WIN TOO

YOU KNOW . . .

YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ' LL HAVE TO DO

AN END TO RUNNING

I can only recall

Only a few times of happiness

when I was home.

It wasn ' t enough.

I started to roam...

I ran and ran...for days...and days...

Every once in awhile, I would stop and pray.

I would get to where I thought I wanted to be,

But it wasn ' t what I wanted,

There was..... only..... me.

I stayed here and there..

And here and there...

I wanted to keep on running...

But to WHO?...

To WHERE?

I finally came to the Ranch

Which I love so much...

I now have love, friends and family,

A loving touch.

Believe in Him

Believe in Him, and what He has done,

That He gave His only Son.

HE IS THE WIND, THE RAIN, THE TREES...

AND HE LOVES ME!

Veronica age 14

MY MOTHER 'S EYES

My mother 's eyes never changed-
Not when she
Was looking
At me.

Her eyes
Were so full of hate-
MEAN
CRUEL
RED
Like a devil.

She looked so beautiful when she smiled-
I wanted so bad
For her to smile
At me.

I wanted her to look at me
With love-
To care for me...

But her eyes were so full of hate...

I 'M GLAD I HAVE MY FATHER 'S EYES.

SOMETIMES, SOMETHING

Sometimes...
SOMETHING...

Gets in me...
I GET SO MAD

LIKE I 'M ON FIRE
LIKE I 'M IN HELL

But
Then
I hurt

And I 'm too afraid
To tell anyone
How I feel.

FORGIVE ME

Sometimes
When I get mad
And feel like running away-
I just tell myself to STOP.

I wish I could do that all the time.

But sometimes
When I get really mad
And feel like running away
I don 't even tell myself to stop.

I have to ask God to forgive me.

Veronica age 14

A BIRD

I want to be a bird
Cause birds can fly up in the sky
Where they don 't have to worry.

They don 't have to worry 'bout nuthin ' -
And if they have babies
They just
Take care of them...

A bird would never give her baby away
Like my mama did.

I wonder if
You could fly
High enough
To see
God...

CRYING

Everyone cries.

Sometimes it is good to cry.

I CRY ALOT.

Sometimes I cry for a day,
And that is probably good
Because the crying
Takes away all the **ANGER**
That I feel inside.

I could make a river with my tears...

I look in the water
And the river lets me see myself...
Lets me look at
All the feelings I hold inside.

THE BOX

It 's like I have a little box
Inside me...

When something goes wrong

I save it-

Put it in the box...

Everything that goes wrong

Goes into the box.

I save it...

Save it... save it.

Then something goes wrong

And I try to save it

But there 's no room anymore...

But I stuff it in anyhow-

Then I lock the box...lock it.

BUT IT POPS OPEN ANYHOW

POPS OPEN

EVERYTHING GOES OUT

EVERYWHERE

IN PIECES

INTO THE AIR

ON EVERYTHING

Then I feel better again.

But not really.

Veronica age 14

WHY PEOPLE HIT CHILDREN

I think

People hit children

Because they need help themselves...

And kids get in their way.

The children try to help...

Children try and try and try

to be good and make them happy...

But nobody notices-nobody

wants their help.

I feel sad.

I wish everybody could learn to love.

GANGS

Jesus wants people

To love each other

Not hate each other

Not kill each other in gangs.

God loves you.

He wants everyone

To have a chance to grow

To reach for your goal.

The goal he has made for just you.

He is right there beside you,

So **please** get to know him.

RESPECT

Many people

Do not respect me

For who I am.

They pick on me and make fun of me;

That makes me sad.

It hurts so bad,

I just want to die.

I would never want anyone else

To feel this way.

What is respect?

It is not cussing in front of others

Even if you are very angry...

It is listening

Even when you don ' t agree with someone.

Even if you don ' t like someone,

You should still listen to them, anyhow

Because that

Is respect.

You should respect others

If you

Want to be

Respected, too.

Veronica

I REMEMBER

I remember thinking
"Mama 's been drinking
. . . I hope she
won 't see
me".

I remember hiding
behind the door
wishing she
wouldn 't hit me
anymore.

Holding my breath
trying to be quiet
when she was in the room . . .
" Maybe she 'll fall asleep . . .
Maybe . . . soon ".

SOMETIMES I GET SCARED

Sometimes I get scared-
Scared I might have to leave here
For being bad.

Like always...

Leaving...

Being bad...

Bad again.

Again

Leaving...leaving...leaving.

I 'M TRAPPED

I 'M TRAPPED

AND NOBODY KNOWS IT
BUT ME....
CAN SOMEBODY HELP ME?

I 'M TRAPPED IN CHAINS

AND NOBODY HAS THE KEY
NOBODY
CAN REACH IT.

CAN SOMEBODY REACH OUT
AND GET THE KEY?

I HAVE ALL THESE PROBLEMS IN THERE
I WANT TO GET AWAY FROM THEM!

Still nobody grabs it..

Why does this have to happen to me.

JUST PLEASE SOMEONE REACH OUT
AND GRAB THE KEY!!!

SCARS

In my home

I got hit

Every day

For every little thing...

I got hit

With everything you can think of...

Whatever she could reach;

I have scars.

I have scars...

Most of them are in my heart.

Veronica

JESSICA

Jessica is a great therapist...

She 's like a mom to me.

She wants

The best for me.

I like Jessica a lot..

She 's like an angel mom

That came to me

And saved me

From all the hurt I have been through.

I never want to hurt Jessica

Because she is my very best friend...

SO PLEASE GOD DON' T EVER

MIKE

I know that God sent him into my life...

Mike is my teacher,

Mike is my friend,

He is just like a Dad-

Something I really never knew before.

Mike doesn 't want me to get in trouble-

Or have to go away

For being bad.

He wants me to get an education-

He believes I can do it.

Mike wants me to be what I want to be...

To get the help I need.

But first, Mike says...

I HAVE TO LEARN TO LISTEN.

GOD ' S GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS

When I think of Christmas,

I think of family,

And, although there ' s always a little saddness

About the ones I ' ll miss,

(Mama left, and Daddy died) ...

Christmas still brings me so much joy...

BECAUSE I HAVE FAMILY HERE...

Here at Hill Country Youth Ranch...

My family here

Cares for me,

Is there for me when I need understanding...

My family here

Forgives me

When I make mistakes...

They just try their best to understand.

My family here forgives me...

Just like God...

God;

Who gave us Christmas

When he gave us his Son.

God;

Who gave me the joy of Christmas

And my loving Youth Ranch family.

David L age 14

GRADUATION NIGHT

I wish I could forget, but I don ' t think I ever will.

It was elementary school graduation night

The girls in pretty dresses . . .

I was proud in my suit . . .

The principal was calling out names...one by one

Names . . . more names . . .

Getting closer to my name . . .

The fear was growing in my heart...

After every name I heard

There was a roar of proud applause....

I was so afraid

To hear my own name . . .

But it was time now

And just as I had feared . . . Afterwards . . .

There was only . . .

S-I-L-E-N-C-E...

There was no one there

To clap for me...

No one to be proud of me.

And I asked myself...

" WHAT DID YOU EXPECT, ANYHOW? "

Father had died...

And Mother...she just didn ' t care.

SILENCE.

David age 15

HAPPY WITH ME

I was just a boy

Trying hard to be loved...

Trying hard to be a man.

Maybe if I do everything for her

Then maybe she will be happy...

Happy with me.

I took care of Dad when he was sick

So Mom wouldn ' t have to.

I was eleven .

She still wasn ' t happy.

...Never was

Happy with me.

When the State came

to take me to a new home

It was ok with her.

I wondered if *then she ' d be*

Happy.

I ' m happy with me now, but sometimes

On her birthday I think of her

And wonder who washes the dishes

and takes out the trash

And takes the beatings and all the yell-

ing...

And forgives her again and again

Even though she never asks.

My Father ' s Flag

by David age 15

Even though my father was old when he died...
And I had known it was coming
Because he had been very very sick for a long time...
I still miss him.
And I cried and cried
Because it was so plain to see
That he was the only one
Who ever really loved me.

I don ' t think my mother loved us...

We never understood why.
And after he died
There was no one there to stop her,
So she beat me
Until there were no more tears to cry.
And I hate to say,
But it was a blessing that day
When the state came to take me away.

It was me who took care of my father

While he was sick...

There was never time for play...

And when they took him in the ambulance that day

I kept telling them...

Maybe there ' s something more

I could do to save him...

It ' s my job to take care of him!

I felt so alone because I knew

He wasn ' t coming back...it was really true.

And nobody would ever love me like he did...

Nobody.

When they laid him in the ground

And the salutes began to sound-

Every shot fired in his honor

Went straight through my heart...

I still feel the scars.

And when they handed me the flag-

The flag that covered the box

That held my dearest friend...

My tears soaked all It ' s stars.

When I held that flag

I remembered how he ' d say

" You ' ll make me proud of you some day ",

But it was *me* who filled with pride

Thinking of the courage he ' d had in the war-

All the suffering he saw, and kept on going...

Kept up the fight for what he thought was right...

Feeling alone, wondering if he ' d ever get back home...

But marching on through the darkest night...

That night when I put my Father ' s flag in my drawer,

I knew he was in heaven with his Father...

And he would be happy to see that the flag is mine now

Because the flag brings me strength and courage,

somehow...

And when my life becomes a battle,

And I face the hardest parts;

When I don ' t feel like fighting...don ' t even know how...

Don ' t know where to start...

I look at my Father ' s flag and remember...his heart.

By David L

MY BURDEN

*I have a burden
And I have asked the Lord,
“WHY MUST I GO THROUGH THIS?”*

*I remembered...
The Bible tells me
God will make a way.*

*In my life,
I have made many mistakes,
But the biggest mistake
I ever made
Was
To let my dad die...*

*People tell me
That it is not my fault
But deep down
I know it is.*

*They tell me I live in the past...
That may well be true
But the past
Haunts me.*

*I have many burdens
In my life...
I hope I can
Lose them all.*

LORD, ARE YOU THERE?

Lord, are you *really there*?
Please answer-I *need* to know.
And why did You take away my father
If you loved me so?
Why didn 't You give me a family
Like others that I see?
And why did You give me a mother
Who hurt me and hurt me and hurt me?
When I was molested *again and again*
I wondered where *You* were...
And when my mother was beating me
I was *bleeding, Lord...why didn 't You stop her?*

Is it *Your* will
That I 'm always sad and crying...

Can I blame *You*
For my father dying?

Should I stop asking, Lord
For my dreams to come true?
Should I just stop
Believing in You?

**I 've asked for so much that You didn 't bring...
Does that mean You aren 't there?**

Does it mean
You don 't care?

I tried to end my life many times,
But not even *that* was a success...
Could it have been *You* who stopped me?...
Is all this sorrow just a test?

By David L

SILENT WISH

My wish today
Is for all Mothers everywhere
To love their children
Every day.
And be ready to catch them
If they should fall.
Come to them
Even if they don ' t know how to call.

THE GIFT OF LOVE

Many years ago, God gave us the gift of Love.
It is a precious gift that cannot be bought or sold.
God gave us this gift of Love
To love and care for one another...

We have mistreated this gift.

If everybody used this gift of Love
The proper way,
Maybe parents
Wouldn ' t beat their children.

If couples would show each other true love,
Maybe there wouldn ' t be
Adultery
In the world.

There are so many ways
We could change the way things are...
If you and I would just *try*...
Maybe we could learn how to use
This gift of Love.

MY FATHER ' S EYES

When I remember

My father ' s eyes,

I remember the eyes of a man

Who loved and cared for all.

And I see those same eyes

When I see the eyes

Of another man

Who loves and cares for me, too...

A man who brings joy

Into the hearts

Of many children.

My own father is gone now,

But I remember how much he loved me.

He wanted to keep me out of trouble.

He was forgiving and kind,

And he loved his children

Even more than himself.

And even though he died, his spirit never will...

And his love for me will lives on, too.

When I lost my dear father,

I never thought I ' d see

Those loving eyes again.

But God is kind,

And He showed me that I was wrong

By showing me eyes like my father ' s.

He showed me

That there is more than one man

With the eyes of a loving father

When he showed me Gary Priour

With eyes

Full of love.

He Chose The Boat

My parents were fighting a lot.
My dad was leaving.
There were choices to make.
There was the boat and there was me.
My Dad-he chose the boat.

I stayed with my mom.

After that, we saw my Dad
only a couple of times .

I took care of my mom

until the day the state sent me away
because of her drinking.

It ' s been seven years

Since I saw my dad.

I wonder if he still has that boat.

Matthew, age 10

A Home for My Heart

As a child, I 've grew up with sorrows and pain

*My life then was so hard . . . words could not explain.
I grew up not knowing how to touch, dream, and love,
I grew up not having what I needed most . . . a family.*

Years later, I am now at Hill Country Youth Ranch . . .

And I have what I have always wanted . . . a family.

I am blessed to have two wonderful foster parents

That will never abandon me . . . but keep on loving me;

. . . I have great sisters that make me laugh and smile,

And a home where I can stay for more than just a while.

Since I 'm no longer a heart without a home

I don 't have to fear being alone.

This is my home

This is where I belong.

Every heart needs a home.

Kim age 17

WHO AM I

I am an actor

I use a mask

But I don ' t participate in festivals...

I am a pretender

But I ' m not a child anymore.

I act.

I act like there ' s nothing wrong.

I use comedy to escape my pain.

I use a mask to hide my sorrow.

And I pretend my past was normal...

But I still don ' t know

Who I am.

Nicholas, age 16

WHAT I SEE

I see life, I see death...

I see love, I see hate...

I see sadness, I see happiness...

I see people.

I see you...

But the one thing I cannot see

Is me.

I see darkness, I see light...

I see the sun, I see the moon...

But even though I try and try...

I still can ' t see

Me.

James, age 16

Isaac age 13

MAMA

I still love her...
With all my heart.
I wish we had never been torn
Apart.
She left me behind
Without even a sign.
When she left
I felt it deep in my heart...a BURN
But I guess we never know
When it will be our turn.

Note: Isaac 's mother was killed
in an auto accident.

THE VOLCANO

My anger
is like
A volcano.
The lava
Is
HATE BURSTING OUT...
The Red Hot lava cools...
Turns black and cold
As I look down
Over a city
Destroyed by a volcano...
Crying
Hurting
Praying
Ambulances.
I look down at myself
And I feel sad
Because I think of the
People I hurt.
I blame myself
And wish I could hide

NO MORE

I want so bad to change.
I don 't want to be a volcano anymore.
Sometimes I watch the ducks
“ Quacking ” -like they ' re talking things
out...
Then just floating along on the water
Like nothing bad ever happens-
NO HURTING
NO HITTING
NO CRYING
NO BREAKING
NO HATE.
NO VOLCANO!

I WISH

I wish
I knew how
To be kind
To people who care about me.
I don 't know why
But if I start to get close to someone
Then I start to get mean to them...
I know they 'll just leave
Like everyone else has...
And that makes me mad...
I want to learn
How to express these feelings...
I wish I could tell them how much it hurts
To miss someone when they go away.
I wish I could
Learn to be kind.

by Isaac age 13

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS

It 's Christmastime, Jesus...

Your Birthday!

I 'd like to give you something nice,

And I 'm thinking hard today

About everything you 'v e given me...

When I was sad and alone,

You gave me a place to live,

And people to love me, too...

And the Bible says you love me *all the time*...

Even when I do things I know aren 't right...

And the very best gift you ever gave

Was when you died for me one night.

I don 't know if you 'd like the baseball

That I got when I was small...

And I guess you 've already got

hundreds of frogs,

Like the one I caught down by the pond...

If I could I would get you

a golden crown with diamonds

Because you really are a King...

But they say you don 't like riches

Like fancy bracelets and rings...

Happy Birthday, Jesus!

I finally decided what my gift will be!

The very very best gift

I could ever give to you

(It 's really something *anyone* could do)...

I 'll try and try

Every single day

To love others, just like You

And to be the best that I can be

In every thing I try to do...

Dear Jesus , that will be my gift to you.

TREES IN THE WIND

Trees in the wind

Move side to side

Holding hands

Swinging back and forth ...

If trees had legs, they would run
from humans.

Trees...in the rain...

Praying limbs

Standing together

Sharing strength

Through the storm.

Humans should listen to trees.

SOMETIMES

Sometimes

I say things

I don 't really mean...

Like

" I hate you! "

Or

" I don 't need you "

But what I 'm really thinking is...

I DON 'T DESERVE

TO BE LOVED.

Kennard age 11

GOD SEES

God sees tomorrow.
He sees everything
We have ever done.
He sees trees blowing.
He sees the wind and the sun.
And He sees all His people
Every day.

. . . He sees all His people
Sharing love
Keeping love inside
Giving love
And taking love away.

FOR GOD ' S SAKE

I don ' t understand
Why people fight
And hurt each other
And lie and steal.

God gave everyone a brain
To use instead
Of guns and fists and ugly words.
If everyone just will.

FOR GOD ' S SAKE

We all need to think
Before we lie and hurt and steal.
Before we kill.

MAMA IN PRISON

I saw Mama there in prison
Like a bird with cats all around-
Cats who would pounce on her
If she tried to fly or move at all.
She was so big and me so small . . .
Time . . . has moved slowly since then.

I wanted to tell her,
But I didn ' t get the chance,
That having my Mama in jail
Is like losing your rhythm
When you need *so bad* to dance.

" Mama, I ' m thinking of you.
You are a butterfly in a spider ' s web. . . .
Sometimes I am, too " .

SOMEDAY

How Could she
Forget about me
So easily?

There ' s no place

She can go
Where no one will know; . . .
God is everywhere
He will always be there

Someday she will have to say
WHY . . . Why she went away.
Someday.

Kennard age 11

I will never stop thinking about my mother and how she

JUST LEFT ME there

It hurts bad.

THE CHOICE

Mama, I 'm asking God

To take you a message. . .

I 'm asking God to tell you in my voice

That I love you *no matter what*,

When you win and when you lose.

Of course, I know what you do

with your own life

is your choice . . .

But could you *please think* about

Changing the things you choose?

HOW

How could a teddy bear

Be a snake in the garden, too?

How could an angel

Do the things you do?

Some things are bad

Some things are good.

Most people are both.

LION IN A CAGE

You sit there alone in jail

Like a lion in a cage

Away from the jungle

Where a lion wants to be.

Maybe this will be enough

To make you see

What losing you

Felt like to me.

I SEE MYSELF

I see myself on a stage someday

Thanking all the people for coming

To hear me sing that day.

I feel it deep inside, so it must be

What God who sees the future

Has planned for me.

Mama sang to me when I was small

But she lost her right to sing one day

When she chose the wrong way.

I want to keep my voice

So I 'll be careful with my choice.

Someday I 'll be somebody

And I 'll sing my heart out every chance I

get

In front of God and everybody.

I AM A STAR

When I sing

It takes me to another world

Where there are

No mothers in prison

Or robbery

Or ugly words

Or streets with wars.

When I sing

I go to another world

Where people are kind

And love each other.

When I go there

I am somebody . . .

I am a star.

Dustin age 17

Note:

On his 5th birthday, Dustin's father killed his mother, right in front of him. He lived at the Ranch for awhile, where he always wrestled with his darker side. Dustin was imprisoned for 5 years for a crime he committed after he left the ranch at age 20. These poems were written by Carol Priour, a childcare worker, in response to letters she received from Dustin in prison.

I MISS THE COLORS MOST

The guards in blue
And everything else white . . .
On white . . .
Over white . . .
Under white . . .
Beside white . . .
Blue. White.
I miss the colors most.

I know
When my time here is done
The trees will be greener
Than ever before
The sky bluer
The sun more golden
The roses redder
And God more real.

They say I am a child of God.
Lost child.
I wonder if He has missed me
As much as I have missed the colors?

VISITATION DAY

Its hot in here in the middle of June
July and August will be coming soon!
I 'm not afraid of them; there 's nothing I can do.

Better not to show fear in here.
And there 's nothing like a hot summer day
(In this place that must be a lot like hell)
To cause mountains and mountains of memories
To come burning through your mind
Like a field afire . . . with no water well

My memories-
They have been in prison too
Just like me on this hot day in June.
I kept them locked away for a long long time
" Locked up where they belong "
(Like they say about me)
I 'm no fool-I know the damage memories can do.
So every time they 've tried to get out,
I made sure there were guards all about.

But when the guards open the prison door
And I am a prisoner of the state no more . . .

Jennifer age 14

She Mattered to Me

Daddy treated Grandma

Like she didn 't matter.

But she mattered to me.

Sometimes when they would leave us alone

For a long time

She would come over

And help me take care of the other kids.

He pushed her and hurt her.

It made me so sad.

I thought he was the reason she died.

And I hope in heaven she remembers

WHY MAMA, WHY?

Mama, why did you leave me?

Why did you never tell me that you loved me?

Why did you leave me with him?

He beat me . . . and *worse*.

All the pain

All the sorrow

And anger

Have grown inside of me.

I want to let it all out,

But I don 't know *how*.

I cry myself to sleep.

And I keep asking,

“ Why, Mama, Why? ”

WE WANTED TO BE LIKE HER

Mama was out drinking one night

Probably with her boyfriend.

We wanted to be like her,

My sister and I.

We put on her makeup

And thought we looked so pretty.

We wanted to be like her.

When she came home

And saw us

She burned us with her curling iron.

I don 't know why

But we still wanted to be like her.

ANGIE

Angie was so tiny . . .

My newborn sister.

I don 't know why

She cried and cried that night.

Daddy yelled at Mama

That if she didn 't shut her up

Then he would.

Angie kept on crying.

Daddy took her to the bathroom

And put her tiny head

In hot water.

HELPLESS

I don 't know why

Mama had to hit the baby

She was too little

To do anything wrong.

She was so helpless.

I felt helpless, too

Because

I couldn 't help the baby.

Jennifer age 14

SOMETIMES

Before the state took us

When I was seven,

Mark was four,

Mercedes was three,

Cassie was one,

And Angie was a baby . . .

Before then,

They left us at home alone a lot . . .

Sometimes for days.

I was the oldest,

So I took care of everyone.

Sometimes I had to ask the neighbors for food.

Sometimes I didn ' t go to school.

Sometimes I was tired.

Sometimes I was scared.

Sometimes I didn ' t know what to do.

MAMA, I STILL LOVE YOU

Mama, I still love you

Even though you drank too much

And beat me

And did drugs

And left Daddy for your new boyfriend.

None of those things

Can take away the love I have for my mama.

The drug overdoses

Really scared me.

The beatings

Made me feel

Like no one loved me.

HOPING

I didn ' t get to say "good-bye " .

When she left, she never came back for us.

I ' m hoping she knew Jesus:

I think maybe she did.

After she would beat us

She would sit down in the chair and cry.

It was like she never wanted

To do the things she did.

Then she was quiet.

Maybe she was praying.

And if she does know Jesus,

I ' m hoping He will

Stop her from doing drugs and drinking.

I ' m hoping I will see her again someday,

And the drugs and drinking will be gone.

I ' m hoping she will be glad to see me.

I ' m hoping.

Jennifer

GRANDMOTHER

My father is in jail.
No one I know knows where my Mama is.
When I was seven and in the first grade
The “new father ” at the foster home
Did things to me
That make it hard to trust anyone anymore.

My grandmother,
She was good.

When she was alive I always knew
That someone loved me.
When I need her, I have her in my heart.
I need her now.

I KNOW

God,
All I want
Is to be happy
And have a family,

I know
My parents gave me up.
Maybe that was for the best.
I wondered if my dad was so sick

MY DREAM

I dreamed about adoption
For a long time. . .
Hoping someone would choose me
And my brother and sisters, too.

“ Maybe ”, they told me.
“ If you can be good enough ”

ALONE

I remember the first night.
I remember the exact time . . .
There were many times after that.

I remember the days alone.
Why did you do it?
You hurt me.
You left a scar in my heart-
You can ’ t even see it,
But it will always be there.

Why did you rape me?
Didn ’ t you see
I was only seven?
Alone . . .alone . . .alone.

I DIDN ’ T TELL

I didn ’ t tell
Anyone
For a very long time . . .
What he did to me at the foster home.
(Not until
After we moved
To another place.)

Who would want to hear?
Would they believe him or me?
Would he hurt me for telling?

I guess everyone thought I wasn ’ t grateful
When I wanted to leave.

Jennifer

SOMEBODY WANTS US!

We ' excited.

There 's a family

that wants all of us!

*Maybe I can have my own
room.*

Probably not.

That 's ok.

I'm excited!

I THOUGHT

There were 21 kids in that house;
Boys in one room, girls in the other.

It didn 't seem like

They adopted us because they
Really wanted us;
They were so unhappy.

I thought adoption would be better.

I thought

I Would be happy.

ADOPTION

Why is there even adoption
when all it does is give us brutalization?

We may cry and whine,

But deep inside we know it will never "be just fine "

And as the years go by,
we all wonder why.

Why did we have such hopes for this adoption,
When all it would bring would be brutalization?

DEPRESSION

I don 't want to

Be depressed all the time.

I just don 't know how to

Get it to stop.

HOPING

I 'm dreaming of a home someday . . .

a big, tan, two-story house .

I 'm dreaming I will be a mother

and have two children;
a boy and a girl.

I 'll be a country singer . . .

and I will tell my children
over and over again
that I love them. . .

So they will never have to wonder. . .

and I 'm hoping I will always remember

the gift God gave me
when He gave me

Life.

Michael C age 10

Michael 's mother died from a heroin overdose.

SHE SAID

She said she would come to watch me play football someday and she said she got another letter from Daddy in prison and she wanted us to listen to her and not do what she had done with her life and she said to stay away from drugs and she said she **would stop and she said they didn 't allow dogs so we couldn 't have a puppy she** said our house was too small and we would get a better one someday and she said I was growing up too fast and she wanted me to be something when I grew up, not like her she said she loved me and she said she wanted me to eat my vegetables and she said I should watch out for my little brothers and keep my fingernails clean **and she said the State wouldn 't have to** take us because she was never going to do drugs again.

She said she 'd come to visit on Sunday.

Or maybe Friday.

Sometime in December.

She said she had stopped doing drugs.

(they said it was heroin)

She never said good-bye.

SOMETIMES

Sometimes

when I cry myself to sleep

I can see . . .

the snake .

He 's laughing at me.

THE SNAKE

Heroin

Is a snake .

It will bite you

And hurt you

And hurt the ones that love you

And take away all the things you love.

The snake will poison your body and mind,

Then it will kill you and not even care.

My mother found the snake

When she was twelve.

Thinking it was friendly

She took it home with her.

She kept it and cared for it for twenty years

Then the snake killed her.

GOOD-BYE

The day Mama was buried

It was cold and almost Christmas.

Sunnie and Bubba

And my brothers and me

We tried to go.

I needed to say good-bye.

But the road was icy.

Dangerous.

The car was sliding like a snake

Across the road.

We turned around and went home.

I said good-bye in my heart.

The road was dangerous

Like the one she took when she was only a girl

And she first thought drugs would be fun.

I wish someone would have warned her

About this icy cold day in December

When we would have to say good-bye.

Michael C age 10

THE BIG WARM BED

Sometimes we all would
Snuggle in her big warm bed
And Mama would tell us a story
And how much she loved us.

Then the snake came
And brought heroin like an apple
In the garden of Eden.

The snake came
And took away
The stories
And all the hugs
And the love
And the big warm bed . . .

And the snake took away my mother.

A PICTURE OF HER

I remember a picture of my mother.

She was so happy
Standing beside my grandmother.

It seems so long ago
When she had stopped
doing drugs for awhile.

If I can find that picture,
I will put it in a pretty frame
And keep it forever.
For now, I keep it in my heart
Beside the other things
that make me smile.

IT WAS NOT MY FAULT

It was not my fault,
she knew I loved her.

It was Not my fault,
I did the best I could.

It was not my fault,
the heroin, not me, killed her.

It was not my fault,
there was nothing I could have done
to stop her.

It was not my fault,
she started doing drugs
before I was even born.

It was not my fault.

It was not my fault.

It was not my fault.

It was not my fault.

It was not my fault.

If I say it enough
maybe someday I can believe . . .

It was not my fault.

Michael C age 10

YOU LEFT ME

You left me
A bent photograph
And something heavier than lead
To carry forever
In my head
When you left me
Wondering
Why you
Would rather be dead
Than be
My mother.

GRANDMA, IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT

Grandma, it was not your fault.
She chose to take drugs.
I 've accepted it, maybe you can too.
There was nothing we could do.
Grandma, it was not your fault.
She chose to take drugs
Then the drugs took over.
And took her away.
Grandma, it was not your fault.
When the drugs took over
There was no love left inside for us.
Just for the heroin.

She 's gone now

She knows we love her still.
Grandma, she would want you to know
It wasn 't your fault.

SHE COULDN 'T SEE

I 'll think I 'll be
An astronomer someday. . . .
Or a football player, that would be fun.
But I 'll never do drugs
Or I can 't be either one .

There are two telescopes in my room
One is red, one is black.
I can see the moon.
With the black one, on a good day
I can see Jupiter, I hope it 's soon.

My mother couldn 't see

Anything...Not even me
It didn 't seem like her
When the drugs took over, she didn 't care
She saw things that weren 't even there.

She couldn 't see the way things were,
That the drugs were killing her.

Sometimes I miss her so much

I imagine she 's a star.

I get out a telescope
(Either red or black will do)
And I look for her in the sky
And I wonder if she sees me, too.

Michael C age 12

TWO FACES

It just seemed like a regular day . . .
Except that I was feeling
Really sad and lonely . . .
And I thought
A hug from Mama would take it all away . . .
Make everything ok.

I went to look for her
And there she was
With a needle in her arm
And a look on her face

That didn ' t even look like my mama

The mother I thought I knew . . .
The one who loved me.

This was not the face
Of the mother
Who read me stories
And told me to wear my coat when it was cold
And to eat my vegetables
So I could grow up and be strong.
No, this was not *her* face .

I GUESS SHE HAD TWO FACES.

(Maybe everybody does.)
Everybody has two faces

WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN TO GOOD PEOPLE?

Why do bad things happen to good people?

I know that my brothers and I

Sometimes do things

We shouldn ' t do . . .

Sometimes we get in trouble.

But we ' re really good kids.

So why did we lose all the things we loved?

Why did we lose our home?

And why did we lose our mom and dad?

Why did we lose Christmas together and family trips?

And why did we have to lose each other?

Why?

Maybe because they decided to do drugs

And forgot that they would have to pay the price.

The price was too high.

GRANDMA, PLEASE

Grandma please . . .

Please tell me about Mama.

There is so much
I never got to know.

Was she once a good little girl?

What color was her favorite?

What made her start doing drugs?

Was she pretty?

I always thought she was pretty.

Grandma, please. . .

Please tell me about Mama.

Did she love me?

Did she love my brothers?

Did she love herself?

Did she ever love at all?

Grandma please . . .

Please tell me she did.

Michael C age 12

LOST SOUL

It started out to be a wonderful night.
Mama was telling us happy stories.
She wanted to be with us
More than anything.
She was so happy . . .
Telling stories. Laughing.

Then from nowhere

Like a bolt of lightning

She flipped!

Cursing!

Talking to things that weren' t there!

It didn ' t seem like her.

I didn ' t know it was the drugs.

I wanted a hug.

I wanted to talk to her.

I wanted to hear another story.

I wanted her to come back.

When she died,

I felt like a lost soul.

I guess the real lost soul was Mama.

I didn ' t want her to go.

I want her to come back.

GRANDMOTHER ' S LOVE

My broken life . . .

My broken heart is

Like a broken picture

That once looked so beautiful.

Now it hurts so much to think about

But I know

I have to put my life back together.

I can ' t go back in time and warn her

That the heroin would kill her

And break everything apart.

I have to put my life back together.

My grandmother ' s love is the glue I will need

To start.

MOM AND DAD

My Dad was never around . . .

Or when he was

He didn ' t have time for us.

I didn ' t know

He was out selling drugs

Until the day the police came .

They banged him against the wall

And took him away.

My mom didn ' t have time, either

At first I didn ' t understand why . . .

I thought it was me.

Feeling lonely one day,

I went looking for her, hoping for a hug.

She had a needle in her arm.

She saw things that weren' t there.

She didn ' t see me.

He ' s in prison.

She ' s in heaven.

I still love them both.

I HAVE TO REMIND MYSELF

I have to remind myself

That good is more powerful than evil.

When I ' m lying in my bed at night

Thinking of my dad in prison

And my mama dead from drugs

My brothers living in another home . . .

I have to remind myself

That good is more powerful than evil.

Even though sometimes

I cry myself to sleep

And have to remind myself again and again and again . . .

I don ' t know why I know it, but I do . . . it ' s really true-

Good is more powerful than evil.

Jamie B age 13

Cry

I cry . . . because I don ' t have my mom.
I cry . . . because she left when I was so young.
I cry . . . because she said it was my fault.
I cry . . . because she didn ' t tell me
that she loved me.
I cry . . . because she never came home.
I cry . . . because she didn ' t believe me.
I cry . . . because she didn ' t care.
I cry . . . because *she didn ' t believe me!*
Why, Mom, why?

Now I cry.

Mother, Will You Come Back?

Mother, will you come back?
I ' m scared you won ' t.
Why did you leave me in the first place?
You said you might come back, but you didn ' t.
Do you care if you make us cry?
Do you care for us at all?
Please come back.

Why Did You Leave Me?

Why did you leave me?
You said you wouldn ' t leave.
You did anyway.
What did I do wrong?
You said you would take care of me.
You didn ' t.
You didn ' t give me a chance.
Did you get tired of me?
Why did you leave me, Mom?

Mothers

Mothers are good to their children.
Mothers care for their children
more than you cared for us.
Mothers love their children allot.
Mothers do not leave their children
like you left us.

I Wonder

I wonder . . .if my mother is . . .DEAD?
(I act like I don ' t care, but I do.)
I wonder . . . If she ever thinks about me anymore?
I wonder if she talks about me anymore?
I wonder . . . where she is right now.
I wonder . . . If she has a boyfriend.
I wonder and wonder and wonder,
But I never
Get any answers
Or even a sign.

You Said you Left Because

You said you left because of the way I acted.
You said you left because I treated my step dad with disrespect.
You were right, Mom, I didn ' t respect him.
He treated me like a piece of trash lying on the ground.
Every night, he sexually, verbally, and physically abused me.
Every night.
You said you left because I lied about my step dad.
What I told you was true.
You blamed it all on me.
You said you left because . . . of me.

Jamie B age 13

I Still Think You 'll Be There . . .

I still think you 'll be there . . . when I feel bad.
I still think you 'll be there . . . when I need help.
I still think you 'll be there . . . when I need you.
I still think you 'll be there . . . to talk to me
about stuff I need to know about you.
Like your favorite color.
Your favorite food.
Your favorite television show.
Your favorite singer.

I still think you 'll be there . . . to tell me stuff.
I still think you 'll be there . . . to tell me you are back.
to take care of me the right way.
I still think you 'll be there . . .
to tell me you 're going to stay with me.
I still think you 'll be there . . . to be the correct mother
To me and my little brother, Angel.

I still think you 'll be there, Mother. . . but I know you won 't.

Love Is

Love is . . .
Love is good.
Love is wonderful.
Love is understanding.
Love is . . .
Love hurts.
Love is painful,
Love is confusing.
Love is true.
Love is questioning,
Love is not knowing.
Love is . . .

“ I Know You 're There, God

I know you 're there, God,
because You have answered my prayers.

I know You 're there, God
because You lead me to do the right things,
but sometimes I don 't listen to You.

I know You 're there, God
because You show me right from wrong.
But sometimes, instead of doing right I do wrong.

I know You 're there, God. ”

Adriana age 15

Note: Adriana 's mother was a victim of domestic violence.
She was beaten to death. Many women die this way every day,
right here in America, in their own homes. Often they leave
behind confused and heartbroken children.

WHY?

Why should I behave?
My mom is dead.
My father left me.
All the people I have left
Are my brothers
And my sister...
Are they worth living for?
God please help me
To understand life.

MY FAMILY 'S EYES

In my Mother 's eyes
I see death.
In my father 's eyes
I see hate.
In my sister 's eyes
I see love.
In my brother 's eyes
I see happiness.
In my eyes
I see Joyfulness.



I 'M SO CONFUSED

I 'm so confused
And I don 't know why.
Everything goes
In and out of my head...
Like running away...
BUT WHY?
I still can 't see why
Everything has to be
So hard to understand.
Love. Hatred. Everything
There is so much
That just doesn 't make sense.
Maria age 16

MY HEART LIKE A FLOWER

My heart
Is like a flower
Growing stronger
In good soil...
But sometimes
When I give my heart
To people
They step on it
And crush it 's petals.
Edlisha age 16

GOLDEN EAGLE

I 'd like to be an eagle
A golden one...
Then I 'd be
Free...
I 'd fly over snowy hills
To catch a fish
For my babies.
Birds
Take care of their babies.
Michael age 12

BUTTERFLY MOTHER

I still remember her.
Her name was Nancy
And she liked to listen to music.
She loved horses
And swimming.

I still remember her.
Her name was Nancy
And she was very very beautiful.
She liked to buy me things.

I still remember her.
As I go from place to place,
She stays with me-
In my heart.

I remember her smile.
She was like a nice beautiful butterfly mother.
And she flew away.

I LOVE HORSES

I love horses.
I like the way the babies
Have shaky legs.
Sometimes I
Am shaky, too.

SHE IS MY AUDIENCE

Mama has been gone a long long time...

She is still my audience
When I sing
She listens to me
Doing my best for her
On a stage in my heart.

Sometimes
I pretend that she
Is dancing beside me
Whispering softly
To remember to be good

Because she
Will always be
My audience.

IN MY HEART

In my heart
Mama talks to me
Says she loves me
Says she misses me
And that she is protecting me.

In my heart
She is a pretty young lady...
Says she 'd like to see me right now
Says she doesn 't want me
To worry anymore.

In her heart
I see myself
As a little princess.

WHILE YOU WERE GONE

(a message to Mama)

A year without you,
The abuse went on and on.
A year without you,
I was half gone.

Lost in his world
Of drugs and alcohol.
I should not have been there
Not at all.

I took my life in my own hands
Because of my dad.
He always beat me...
He made me feel so bad.

I prayed to God to please give me wings;
I wanted to fly,
But since I never got them
The only way out was to die.

Well, I 'm still here...
Some of the hurt is gone.
I 'm feeling better,
I see that life goes on.

Mariah age 15

EVERY DAY

Every day
A child cries for help
While others are on their way.
Every day
A child is abused
While others are free without fear..
Every day
A child is hurt
While others say, why is the world this way?

WHY IS THE WORLD THIS WAY?

Crystal age 16

MOTHER...FATHER...ME

MOTHER...left when I was three months old.
FATHER...hit me...and used my body for himself.
I...am learning how to get on with my life...
WITHOUT MY PARENTS.

Without parents who care

There are many things you don 't learn to do-
Things that some people would call simple-
Like taking a shower every day,
And keeping yourself neat.

There are still times when I get angry
' Cause I don 't know some things,
And I start to feel different...
And ashamed...
Not like others...not normal.

But now there are people who care about me-
They tell me
That if I need help
Just ask...
And they will help me.

Crystal age 16

DAD! DAD!

DAD

DAD WHERE ARE YOU

I MISS YOU

COME BACK

PLEASE COME BACK

DAD PLEASE COME

I WOULD REALLY REALLY

LOVE TO SEE YOU

PLEASE

Edlisha age 16

WAYNE

I never understood why my mother
Ever married him
In the first place!
He was cruel.
He was heartless...
He must not have known
That I am a very light sleeper.

My mom was screaming,
Pleading for help.
I ran to her...
I saw the blood,
Got the phone and jumped into her lap!

I dialed 911
Wayne went berserk-
He grabbed the phone
Slammed it on the floor,
And broke it.

“ Go to bed, Kristen!

This is between your mother and me! ”

I screamed, “Like hell it is! ”

He grabbed my mother by her hair
And banged her head against the wall...

All I have to say now is

Wayne is where he belongs...

In jail. Kristen age 13

DOMINO EFFECT

It was like a domino effect . . .

Dad hit mom,

Mom hit me,

And I hit myself.

I ’ m glad the table

Is finally stable.

THE CHANCE

There is a place-
The Hill Country Youth Ranch
Where troubled kids come
And get a brand new chance...
It is a beautiful valley,
This wonderful Ranch...
I came here alone one day
And was given my chance.
There ’ s something I ’ ll always know...
That there ’ s someone who cares...
Someone loves me, someone who dares
To be responsible for a child
Who ’ ’ got in everybody ’ s hair ’ ’ .

Scott age 18

ALL ALONE

All alone in the mountains

Nobody around,

Wondering if anybody

Really loves me.

The clear blue sky turns to gray

The clouds are still.

Still nobody ’ s around.

Then the sun comes around

Bright and shiny

And me,

I ’ m still alone.

Maria, age 16

The Camping Trip

We run
We climb
We walk
All separate
But together

We ache
We sleep
We argue
All Separate
But together.

We live
Day after day
In the same places
But different.

We eat and drink
From the same bowls
Use the same stream...

We are all separate in our thoughts
But together
In our experience of love.

Jennifer, age 16

IT WAS ME

In my lifetime of experiences
There have been lots of bad.
But getting strung out on drugs
Was the worst I 've ever had.

Eighty days in a hospital
To look inside...
To dry out and look at all
The things I had tried to hide.

I saw no hospital could keep me sober,
No parent could keep me dry...
If I really wanted a healthy clean life...
It was ME who had to try.

Steve age 16

Depression

Depression
Is like being in a
Big
Dark
Hole...
And no one can find me.
They could search and search...
And still not see me.

I am in a big box
With no doors...
No window...
No love.

I call for help...
" Help! "
But no one seems to hear...
Maybe they hear something,
But they don 't know where
The voice
Is coming from.

Nikki, age 16

To Carol, My Angel

I 've always known
That if I ever needed anything,
You 'd be there...
To give me a hug or say a prayer.

You 'd help me
Get through another day
Just by caring
And not walking away.

You held me when I cried.
You stayed understanding
And patient
By my side.

You are my angel
From up above.
I thank God
For your unconditional love.

Jennifer, age 18

FEAR

I have this fear...

Fear of being on my own...

Will I make it all by myself?

...the fear of growing up...

living alone.

When it 's time

will someone be there

to take the fear away?

Everybody says

that you

will always have fear.

Is it true?

Maria age 16

MY CHILDHOOD

I NEVER HAD MY CHILDHOOD...

All that happened in my childhood

was

That I got hurt.

I got hurt with words,

And things that left scars

Forever.

People look at me

Like they are asking

“ What happened to YOU” ?

All I know is

Someone will pay the price

For hurting God 's child..

Toni age 12

I WANT

I want to stay out of trouble,

To not hit

And learn to write.

Something is telling me

Not to hurt people.

Lamont, age 7

MY HEAVEN

I 'd like to know

Myself

I 'd like to feel

Love

I 'd like to be

Free

I 'd like to smell

A rose

I 'd like to live

Normally

I 'd like to drink

Clear water

I 'd like to fly

Away

I 'd like to believe

In me...

And

I 'd like to see

My Heaven.

Nicholas, age 16

ALL THOSE YEARS

My Daddy- he's in jail...

finally.

After what he did to me...

all those years.

FINALLY...

I am starting to believe,

that maybe everything

wasn't my fault

after

All those tears...

Michelle, age 14

FINDING GOD

I was a lost soul, within myself.

My hopes were lost

In a world where I believed

No one cared.

I was lost because /didn' t care!

I had never learned how...

Until I met you.

You showed me how to care

You showed me how to love.

But most important of all

You showed me you were there.

Dear God, I wish

I had just looked a little harder

A little earlier.

Linda age 15

THE HILL

Everytime you think

Things are getting better...

Just when

You start climbing...

One rock STOPS you

And you *slip*

and fall.

But I 'm learning to realize...

THAT 'S LIFE...

LET 'S TRY IT AGAIN.

James age 16

HOW CAN I HELP MY LITTLE GIRL?

How can I help you, my little girl?
I look at you,
Your life going by...
The light gone from your eyes...
So far out there in the wrong direction...
And I know it won 't help to cry.

When I left you
Alone with your mother
I guess it seemed I didn' t care
What would happen to you there.
I knew she did drugs,
But I never thought
She would give them to you!
I know that I have failed you,
I just don 't know what to do.
God knows, I want to help you.

How can I help you, my little girl?
Is there any way I can find you
In this crazy world?

I remember thinking-
" I ' ll take her with me!"
We ' ll make a new home
Where everything will be OK.
But I was too late.
You seemed so filled with hate!
I made you leave the friends
Of your old life behind...
I know that seemed unkind.
But I still can ' t reach you;
Not even the hospital could.
I feared no one ever would.
Your heart is beating,
But you just aren ' t here.
You can ' t even care.

Dear God,
I made a big mistake, leaving her behind
And I know I haven ' t done my part.
But I ' ve always heard that when we pray,
You will listen, so *please* hear me today...
And please, God, help my little girl...
Her childhood is gone forever,
But could You help us find her heart?

Nancy age 15

(for my father whom I have forgiven for leaving me be-

when I step into the shadows of illusion
 when I step into the doorway of confusion
 I feel the blinding mask of my own mind
 the key to its lock I cannot find
 control seems so far away
 darkness turns into day
 I take unto my feet when the mask is locked on tight
 I have come to find that I am a creature of the night
 the battle of the mind and soul ends up in a grasping hold
because I found it all gets old when i ' m doin what i ' m told
 sloppy seconds are not for me
 though it is all reality
 that is what i must escape
 the plundering and mental rape
 reality is not for me in this day
i ' ve got to do it my own way
 I take a different attitude
when i ' m holding on to you
 so this is what i say
 get the hell outta my way
 I take off confusion
 I reject your delusions
 you try to find a secret hideaway
 but I sure as hell wont let you stay
I ' m tired of hiding
i ' ve come to deciding
 that you oh my hateful disease
 must scream for mercy from me
 to you no kindness shall be shown
 I will send you out in punishment alone
 you can run and ask me to go
 but ill say die and go to hell because I know
 that sloppy seconds are not for me
 and Jesus Christ is reality
 pride does go before a deadly fall
I shall come at Jesus ' call
 to humbleness I must gasp
 my God, my God, my God you have set me free
 my God, my God, of my sins please cleanse me
 from God up above
 comes all power and perfect love
 so I sing my praises unto Him
 the one who cleanses all my sin.

Leroy age 14

Leroy, was a young man with an extremely high IQ and insights beyond his years. A victim of horrible childhood abuse, he worked diligently to understand and manage his bi-polar disorder. Although parented by an atheist, he sought Christianity as an avenue out of the mental anguish he suffered.

Leroy age 14

IGNORANCE

I tried my hardest

But that wasn 't good enough for them.

I wasn 't as good as them.

No one accepted me.

In the school yards they would tease me-

About my clothes,

Or my hair,

But most of all

About my mind.

I loved to use my mind.

They teased me about it.

They called me bad names.

Names I had never heard...

Names I didn 't understand.

I hated them.

ALL OF THEM.

I started showing my hate...

I said terrible things...

I did terrible things.

I tried to be like them but they still hated me.

I even hated me.

I got sent away from home.

It was all my fault.

At least they couldn 't tease me,

Or beat me up.

But no one wanted me.

I didn 't even want me.

I didn 't even know that GOD wanted me.

They kept me ignorant.

UP DOWN IN OUT

Up down in out

my mind is playing tricks on me

thinking I can set me free

a footstep away from fate

death visits quickly; I hasten my pace

my ears hear no voice of love

as I step into the mud

into the darkness deep and still

feeling sadness with a thrill

my heart is feeling hard and cold

remembering things untold

and as I start to slip ever down

my mind starts turning round and round

grab my hand and help me stand

my house is built upon the sand

there is only one now

that can catch me before I hit the ground

what a traitor is my heart

full of deceit, ever dark

out to destroy the only me

to push me into slavery

I ask the one up above

to bring me through with greatest love

down Up out in.

LeRoy age 15

Leroy age 14

SLAIN

Tempered like steel,
Perfected in fire,
To wear Thy Holy Seal
As Love takes me higher and higher.

Slain am I,
Only to be whole:
The sinner dies,
And my Father takes my Soul.

He deepens His Love
Deep within my heart:
The Spirit like a dove,
Piercing like a dart.

Slain in Spirit,
Like the perfecting of a knife:
My being becomes seared,
As begins a Godly life.
Lord God I thank Thee
For Thy healing and great Love:
Giving me the strength to see
The greatness up Above.

THE PUMP

My brother is a prisoner:
He lives not in a prison,
He is a prisoner of his own hate.

I have discovered a way to free him-
With unconditional Love.

The patient and constant hammering of Love
Can break any lock.

Yet his wall of hate still surrounds him.
His wall has only one opening:
An opening for hate to go out.

So I slowly and carefully chisel another hole in which
I release my love and the love of Jesus.
Love is the greater-
It pumps out the hate.
As the wall crumbles and falls,
Love is given and received freely by my brother.

LIFE 'S ROAD

Your road is there
Before you find it:
And it will
Be there until it is found.

MY BROTHERS AND MY DAD Jennifer J age 14

Why are these feelings coming up now?

I don 't think I 'm ready . . .

It 's hard to say

my brothers could do what they did,

I feel so ashamed.

Why me, out of all the others . . .

I was just a little girl trying to survive.

It hurts so bad.

I thought they weren 't like my dad.

I was so little .

They were so big .

Why did they make me do those things?

I remember the pain.

How I would get whipped when I cried.

Mommy hit me and told me it wasn 't true.

Daddy punched me

and called me a "little fool " .

I remember it like it was yesterday.

I need help.

I don 't know what they saw in me-

I was so little.

I remember one saying,

" If you weren 't my sister,

You could have my baby. "

Why was I the one

Lonely all night until Daddy would come in

Until he hurt me and made me cry again.

Why didn 't he go to Mommy-she was big.

Why did he do it to me over and over?

Over and over, at least twice a day

They would hurt me . . . More and more pain.

Maybe Daddy told them to do all that stuff

Maybe he taught them to do it.

But why to their little sister and his little girl?

I don 't think I did anything to deserve it.

I was a hopeless toy and they were devils.

Destroying me.

Piece by piece.

Why couldn 't they have shot me

and let me bleed?

Why couldn 't they have killed me

and let me rest in peace?

They could have kicked me out of the house .

All this abuse messed up my mind.

Messed me up in the head.

I can 't go to bed at night without thinking-

" are they going to do it again " ?

Please tell me so I can get prepared!]

I think Mommy knew all along,

she was afraid to make a call-

Just one call could have stopped it all.

Daddy made it hard for me to love.

He made me think I was trash.

He made me feel unwanted.

And I wonder if it 's true

I wonder if I 'll turn out

The way he said I would.

JOURNEY

Close your eyes

We 're going on a journey

Back to the past.

We 're going to get rid of the sadness.

Tell him.

You 're giving back

All that hurt he gave you,

So very long ago.

See him standing there -

Get your courage -

Tell him how you feel

About what he did

To that precious little kid.

Tell him *You are*

throwing him out of your life!

Kick him out of the way

Like he did to you

When you were barely

Able to walk . . .

Then just walk away . . .

No, *fly* away!

Jennifer J age 14

UNCONCEIVABLE

He asks,

What kind of a woman can 't provide me with a son.

What kind of a monster are you,

What planet are you from?

His love is strong, just not enough,

To love me though I can' t give him a son.

His feelings, shut off when he hears,

" Sorry, Honey, your child I can 't bear.

I 've prayed time and time again,

To be healed so to you a son, I could give.

I 'm sorry with me something is wrong.

Trust me, for a son, I too long.

My wish, was for you to still care,

Even after you realized, that one part of life

We could never share.

I prayed for you to still by me stand,

But you 've made it very clear,

you want to hold more than just my hand .

My head ached, my heart breaks,

As tears can 't help but roll down my face.

You say you know it 's not my fault,

but you can 't stay,

' Cause why should you and your life suffer

Because of what happened to me back in the day.

You just wipe my eyes, and say "get over it "

' Cause one day I 'm bound to find someone

Who doesn 't want a kid.

Jennifer J, age 23

Raquel age 13

IT WAS HER

It was her who couldn't get me back

It was her who did drugs.

It was her who couldn't stop.

It was her whose lies
hurt me inside.

It was her who *sometimes* brought happiness.

It was her who
I loved so much.

It was her that died.

MY MOM GONE TO HEAVEN

When I was feeling down
She was never around.

Sometimes I cry about the past
My dream that didn't last.

She died in jail of some disease like cancer.

I wish I had been there-

I would have said a prayer...

Asking God to *please help my mother.*

I remember her lucky number . . .

It was seven

But now she is gone to heaven.

Amanda age 15

PLEASE HELP US

Facing my mom after all she's done is hard...

I don't know if I can.

Finding my mom is hard...

Behind the drugs, behind the pain, behind
bars...

I don't know if I can.

I wish so hard that she could find her way out...

Out of the drugs and anger...out of jail...

I don't know if she can.

Oh Heavenly Father, please help us,

AFRAID OF FOREVER

Afraid of my fears
Afraid of not being brave
Afraid of not being strong
Afraid of shedding my tears.
Powerless.

And the fear goes on forever.

Fear that feels like thunder
Loud
Powerful
Explodes inside my heart.

And the thunder goes on forever.

When I hear the thunder
I know a storm is coming
I know the storm
Is inside of me.

And the storm goes on forever.

Denise age 13

FLY AWAY

It was all the drugs and alcohol

That took my Mama away.

It 's been months since she 's been gone,

And I still don 't know how to leave her behind.

I wish I could take her way up in the sky

And leave the bad things in her life below.

We could fly so high...

Away from all her lies.

TOYS

My mom is just a child

Trapped in a child 's mind.

And my sister and me...

We 're the broken toys

She left behind.

Mariah age 16

YOU HURT ME

You hurt me

Oh can 't you see

How you hurt me?

I can 't believe you hurt me.

Why in the world

Would you

Hurt me?

Why do you always

Hurt me?

When you get drunk

You hurt me.

When you hit me

It hurts.

You shouldn 't

Hurt me.

I am a child.

You shouldn 't hurt me.

Please Daddy quit drinking

And it won 't hurt anymore!

BLINDED BY ALCOHOL

You missed my first words,

My first steps,

My first haircut...

What else did you miss?

You were drunk

the day I got baptized.

You missed my *whole childhood.*

Some say I 've grown into

a fine young lady...

You 're missing that, too.

You were never there for me-

When I needed you most...

You were at the bar getting drunk,

Or beating me up.

Through my eyes

If only you could see

What a monster

The alcohol makes you.

The horrible things you used to say

Oh, how they 're hurting me.

I began to believe them,

And now **/can 't see.**

You were drunk all my life-

I never got to know the real you.

BUT IF YOU EVER MEET YOU,

TELL HIM I SAID, "I LOVE YOU, DADDY."

Catherine age 16

Mr. D.,

You might not remember me

BUT I SURE REMEMBER YOU.

You take over every thought I have

And every dream when I sleep.

It ' s like this-

YOU RAPED A LITTLE GIRL!

A girl who had never in a million years

Done anything to deserve such treatment.

I WAS JUST A LITTLE GIRL!

I didn ' t deserve it...I DIDN ' T!

You hurt me in so many ways that you ' ll never know.

You ' ll never FEEL THE FEAR that torments me

EVERY TIME I TURN OUT THE LIGHTS.

You ' ll never know what it ' s like

To look at Jesus ' face and never SEE it.

ALL I SEE IS YOU!

You will not leave me alone.

Do you realize what you did?

You practically DESTROYED MY LIFE!

If there wasn ' t a God,

I certainly wouldn ' t have lived

Through what you did to me.

Sometimes I can ' t sleep . . . I can ' t eat.

I hope I make it through *ONE HOUR*

Without remembering

The awful things you did to me.

I don ' t want your apologies,

I want you to leave me alone.

JUST GO AWAY!

There ' s no way I can forgive you,

But maybe someday I can forget.

PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE!

Catherine age 16

NIGHT TORMENT

I 'M SITTING ALONE IN MY ROOM

TRYING TO GO TO SLEEP

FOR THE LAST HOUR AND A HALF

I NEED TO SLEEP

BUT I JUST CAN 'T.

IT 'S LIKE

MY BODY KNOWS

WHAT 'S COMING

THE SECOND I CLOSE MY EYES

SO IT JUST WON 'T LET ME

SLEEP.

MY BODY KNOWS

IT DOESN 'T WANT TO FEEL HIS HANDS

ALL OVER IT

IT DOESN 'T WANT TO HEAR

HIS WHISPERS.

SO NIGHT AFTER NIGHT

THE FIGHT GOES ON...

MY BODY FIGHTS WITH MY MIND

MY MIND WANTS ME TO DEAL WITH THIS

GET PAST IT AND START LIVING

BUT MY BODY JUST DOESN 'T WANT

TO LIVE THROUGH IT ALL

AGAIN

I 'd gladly carry anything on my shoulders

For a hundred miles

To catch a glimpse of that child 's smile

On my lifeless face again.

Matthew age 11

YOU NEVER KNEW

I 'm going to tell you some things tonight that you never knew . . .

You never knew about the spelling bee I won.

You never knew my favorite color or my favorite animal.

You never knew about the tears I cried when you turned away from me.

You never knew the pain I felt when you never once looked back.

You never knew that I still told you I loved you every night.

You never knew of the time I almost took my own life.

You never knew those who cared for me. Finally.

And, apparently, you never knew what it means to be a mother.

THE LETTER

Well, Mom, you had some nerve to ask for my address!

I guess the conversation we had at school before *CPS came to pick me up didn 't sink in.

You seem to forget that you hurt me-mentally and physically – and now ***I 'M MAD ABOUT IT!***

Dad might have done me a favor by trying to kill you!

I do want to tell you that I actually meant something to someone who actually cares about me.

That is something I never got from you-love!

When I was crying she actually *cared* . . . When you saw me cry, you never even cared.

CPS has taught me that I don 't have to lie,

And I don 't have to hide what I really want to say.

It 's called *speaking your mind*, and I do it pretty well now.

I used to wonder whether you actually cared a little about me,

but now I know you neither cared about me or wanted me.

This is the letter I have wanted to write you for so long. Now here it is.

And, by the way, please don 't write me back.

Sincerely.

Your Son

Note: CPS indicates, Child Protective Services

THE CONVERSATION

You said you wanted to talk to me, but you knew very well that I have nothing to say to you. You say you are sorry, but how can I believe *that*? Trust! Mom, you burned that bridge a long time ago. You want to know what I think about trust? I trust nobody, thanks to you. I am always trying to find the fine print.

Love. What 's that? You seem to forget that all you ever did was abuse me. Did you for get so easily the night you hit me so hard my glasses flew across the room? Unlike you I don' t forget. Every night I try to forget and forgive rather than resent and remember, but the memories just won 't let me forget.

This conversation is over. Good-bye.

Angel age 15

MYSELF

Circles form around my eyes
Contemplation, schemes, lies.
All this funnels through my head
While I lie here in my bed.

They say I 'm crazy . . . Insane;
I think I 'm normal and they 're too plain.
They just don 't see how different we are
I 'm not like them, not like them by far.

It 's not bad,
Why should it be?
People want me to change,
I WANT TO BE ME.

A MOTHER 'S LOVE

A mother 's love is something
That no one can explain
It is made of deep devotion
Sacrifice and pain.

When she sings,
Lord,
Please,
Hear her voice.

AN EMOTIONAL DISEASE

In time
In my mind
I climb
'till I find
Who 's to blame?
It 's not my shame,
It 's my pain.

I cannot talk
I look ahead
I cannot walk
My feet are lead.
My days aren 't bright,
As they should be,
I plunge toward night
I cannot see
So many changes
They leave me confused
My friends are strangers
My life has been bruised
Oh God please help me
Oh help me please
Only You have a cure for
My emotional disease.

Sarah age 16

WHIRLPOOL

I 'm in a whirlpool

Twisting and turning around me

How will I get out

The answer remains to be seen.

My breath has been sucked out

Taken by the enemy

He has me in his grasp.

I can 't even see clearly.

He 's tormented me all my life

Enjoying every bit

I ' fight him all the way

Taking no more of his shit

He hurt me in my younger years

Causing many tears

I 'm still fiercely spinning

Trying to reject my fears

I 'm getting extremely dizzy

Because I can 't get him out of my head

Daddy doesn 't love me

This he 's already said

He subjected me to abuse

Even though I was only five

I 've got countless unhappy memories

I wish I wasn 't alive

At first it was only father

And then his friends joined in

Pushing, punching, thrusting, taking

All of my pride within

My virginity was no longer mine

And the price they paid was money

My face was bruised and bloody

And he actually thought it was funny

The darkness won 't consume me

But I can 't see the light

I 'm crying so hard

Once again daddy 's wpm the fight

I 'm no longer with reality

I 'm living only in the past

He was so harsh and cruel

I need to sleep, and fast

Before I 'm taken to the ultimate depth

And can no longer return.

Murder seems appealing

Because this my daddy has earned

I 'm coming to the surface

Thinking only of revenge

I won 't let the past swallow me this time

Until my next dreams come

By night or by day

The whirlpool will disintegrate

And within it my fears will stay.

JUST FOR ONCE

Well I remember all the bad days

That you and I went through

That made me get away from you

You sold your soul to the devil

When you crossed me too many times

Well you think your deeds were evil

I can 't wait 'till you see my crimes

Just for once

I 'm gonna do the hurtin'

Just for once

The tables will be turned

Just for once

You 'll wish you never met me

Just for once

You 'll be the one concerned.