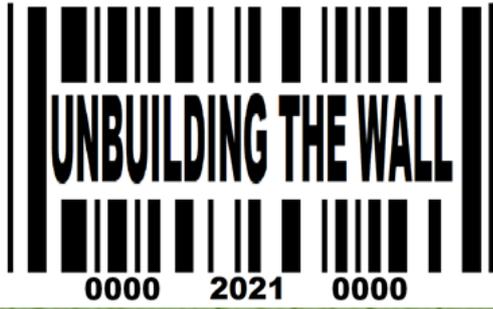
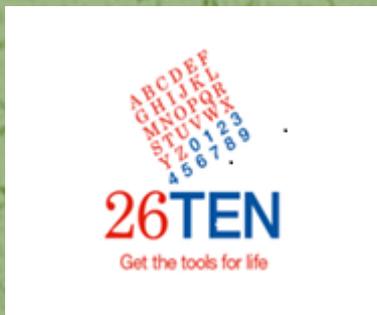


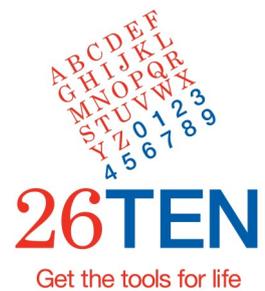
ARTISTS WITH CONVICTION



The **26TEN** Artists with Conviction Written Pieces 2021



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Acknowledgements

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The Artists with Conviction Committee

November, 2021.

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Un~Building the wall

Now that my time has come to be set free, to
make up the things left undone.

To fulfil all my hopes and dreams with my
family longing for me.

After all these years and so many tears,
I can finally see the distance between you and me.

There's a hint of excitement deep inside and an
opportunity for a brand-new life.

The time has come to break down the wall this
barrier that stands between us all.

By: Hemant



I have a future

Behind four walls I sit and wait counting each day till my release date.

A past of bad choices has led me here, no more tears, only up from here.

To many times of doing bad has caught up with me leaving many sad.

A lot of time to think things through, focus on a good future for myself and children I must do.

I realise after all these years of pain, Alcohol and drug abuse. I was not sane.

Family, friends and kids I lost. Gaining their trust back at any cost.

I hope and pray to god each day I'll change my ways for better days.

Knowing I can change and have a great future means a lot and keeps me going.

Praying for a good life, but still not knowing.

The past is gone the future awaits taking care to choose my mates.

Family and friends who do support heaps is a must.

Working hard, I will to gain back their trust.

It's never too late to change my ways, focus and set goals for better days.

Alcohol and drugs are not my mate, a future without them would be great.

I know a future is there for me behind these walls, I wait and see.

Show everyone I'm not the person in the past having this chance could be my last.

There's a future for me I know there is. As long as I stay off the fizz.

So much support still outside. So many chances I have had. Proving myself will make others glad.

Dedicated to Gabrielle, Lachlan and Heidi... Dad's Angels

By Matthew

Cheating the Wall

Memories come back from good times with family.

Back to when we used to go to Oyster Cove, Bruny Island.

Muttonbirding, but only after Easter

Diving for abs, cray fishing competitions to see who could get the biggest crays

Never could beat uncles, who always came up with a bigger catch

'coz they could dive deeper

No plates – take it as it comes

Flathead, mussels

I remember wild mint scrunched in our hands to hide the smell of raw fish

The smell of burning pinecones

What's in the pot Nan?

Pot luck – whatever's in the pot!

Can't beat roo tail stew

Wind in our hair, sand between the toes

Lots of kids

No shoes

No shirts

Adults table and kids table (can't hear what they're talking about)

Always taught to respect the elders – that's the way

Summer days picking raspberries from Sandford – sneaking water in the bucket to
make it look full

Swimming in Longley creek, catch and eat the yabbies.

You can lock me up, but no one can take the memories



Bobby

Be true

We search for a new love, relationship, friendship or just a connection.

But we first need to figure out who we are, and what we are looking for.

We need to be true to ourselves.

If there is a wall, try and unbuild it so you can be your true self
And find contentment and happiness.

Zoe

The Trap

Chop, Pack, Blayze Away/s
To a better place
Where ya not disgraced
Its natural for the human race
To try find comfort
Whatever ya chase...
Bongs, Pills, even shard my mind wills
Thinking I'm the lucky one
This s*** never kills..
There is a catch though..
There usually is. It'll come
When you least expect it and f*** up
Ya biz
So when its feedin time
Try remember this drill,
You can't feed a family
On a pocket full of thrills

Jeremy

Comeback Road

Imagine there's a place, a place carved in stone,
Where loved ones crossed over can visit home.
Comeback road lined with cobblestone, park benches
and rugs, there's even a throne.
Fields filled with flowers, it's never cold, it's never alone
for it's Comeback road, the only place between Heaven & home.
Those unspoken words laid to rest, it's not only
for Humans but family made from pets.
Anyone can visit Comeback Road just once to
mend broken hearts, wipe tears & forget regrets,
all is laid to rest here.
I can see you i cry, i never got to say goodbye,
You've grown your wings & begin to fly,
We meet and embrace just one last time.
Thank you for the shoulder rides, sips of your beer
and for always allowing my family to be near.
We shall treasure those memories & hold them dear.
At Comeback Road it's never goodbye,
just until next time...
We love you...
Fly high

Carly

My Favourite Place..

By Genelle

Leah by my side.
Happiest girl in the world.
Tanner standing tall.
Making us all laugh.
Kobe James on my knee.
Bragging he's mums' favourite.

We are all wearing smiley faces.
Together laughing out loud.
Things have been tough for us.
Still you make me feel so proud.

Talking singing joking.
This is where I want to be.
I could listen to you forever.
My happiness, you are the key.

I love you more.
I love you the most.
I love you more than numbers.

Amazing

Anthony

The marvellous Lord I serve.
The God that gave his own, to save a wretch like me.
What an amazing plan of salvation
from the master mind of creation.
O' that I am just a mere speck in the scale of things,
But you Lord have weighed me in.
In favour through the death of your dear son and saviour.

Amen.



Breaking down the wall... By Nichole

I wanted to be like a lot of other people, who were partying, drinking, smoking and doing different drugs.

So, I said to myself “yep I’m only young I’m going to do that to”.

This is where I built a wall between my family and myself.

One day, I went and sat near a group of friends who were drinking, smoking and laughing.

I thought they cared about me and were my friends.

We would sit down in the park all day and night with a can in one hand and a smoke in the other, laughing and joking, without a care in the world.

I felt so happy, as I had people around me that I thought were my true friends.

But this soon changed one day, when I found out I was expecting a baby. I let these people know, they just laughed at me.

They all just walked away and blew me off.

I was so scared and worried I now had no-one by my side, no- one to turn to and nowhere to go.

But in all truth, it was not me that I worried most about.

It was the child I was about to have.

One night I was walking along the dark street alone when I heard a voice and saw a bright light.

The voice said to me “you’re ok, you’ll be alright, you know what you need to do.”

I sat down in the park that night and had a long hard think to myself.

I thought I have no home nor no warm bed to offer this small child.

A few hours later I had a sharp pain in my stomach, so off to the hospital I went.

With-in 3-4 hours of yelling and crying in pain I had gave birth to a baby girl.

Even though I had built a wall with my family and I.

I still built the courage up to go and say goodbye to the beautiful life that I had gave birth to.

As I looked into her eyes I knew I was doing right by her and giving her a life, a home and a loving family that I’m unable to provide her.

As I turned my back and went to walk away, a light had shined down, so I turned around and put my hand on bub's tummy and I said "hope will always be on your side" "when you feel blue, just put you're on your tummy and know me your tummy mummy is always with you.

Off I walked out of the hospital not thinking of what had just happened.

I rocked up to my family's front door and knocked on the door to my aunty opening up.

She took one look at me and pulled me inside to ask if I was ok.

"No, I'm not I need lots of help please, I need to get back on the right path please help me."

Aunty Twink then saw that I had a hospital band on and asked me what was going on, I told her everything and about bub.

She grabbed me and gave me a big hug and said to me "it's alright everything is going to be ok, you have made the right choice and bub will always know who you are no matter what, and I will help you get better."

This is how I managed to break down the wall I built between my family and I.

Choices

A brick in the wrong hands becomes a weapon, eventually it will become damaged and with no chance of healing will enter upon a path of self-destruction, knowing nothing but despair and with the knowledge of the infliction of pain it has caused will remain solitary, eventually crumbling under the relentless battering burden of sorrow.

A brick in the right hands nurtured and looked after knowing nothing but love will seek others like it, building strong foundations together they will last an eternity and be able to endure everything that is thrown at them, in numbers... together... as family we are strong

It's a pity we can't choose at creation where our foundations begin... it's a shame.

It's easier to tear down a wall than it is to build one right

Josh. P

SHAME, SHAME, SHAME

YOU LAID A CHEATING BLAME
TO FILL A NEED YOU CLAIM
A BETRAYAL OF HIS NAME
AND AN END TO LIFE IT CAME

A DENIAL OF HIM SHOWING
TO YOU HIS LOVE WAS FLOWING
THERE HIS LIFE YOU TOOK AWAY
WITH A FALSE LIE YOU DID LAY
TO CRUCIFY HIM THAT FATEFUL DAY

JUST FOR YOUR GREEDY NEED
SILVER COIN YOUR PLANTED SEED
WITH GREY EYE, SPLIT TONGUE YOU SPOKE
AND NOW HIS LIFE FOREVER BROKE

HIS LIFE AND NAME YOU DID DENY
BECAUSE OF A MADE-UP LIE
HAND HELD OUT TO THE GIVING GATE
FROM THAT SILVER PLATE YOU'LL TAKE
WITH A BLACKENED HEART YOU WILL SLEEP
30 PIECES OF SILVER YOU WILL KEEP

AND SO, IN SORROW HE WILL MOURN
WHEN OUTSIDE HE'LL KNOW THE SCORN
WHILE YOU TURN ON EVERY DAY
WITH HIS BLEEDING HEART YOU'LL HEAR HIM SAY
I WILL LOVE AND FORGIVE YOU ALWAYS MY DEAR.
ALL FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER
SHAME, SHAME, SHAME

ROBERT

The Muster *by Amanda*

The camp is stirring quietly awake
We rise to meet the dawns day-break
The fire stirred with coals glowing hot
The water set for a coffee pot.
Smoke is drifting up and away,
The horses quietly munch their hay.

The kelpie dog with eye on his master
Knows in the bush, he will be faster
To head off those cattle who break the ranks,
As we muster along “The Leichardt’s” banks

The black stockhorse with trailing rein
Will earn his keep upon the wide plains,
The cattle are fresh and feeling frisky,
The scrub is dense, the footing risky.
If across this ground your mount should stumble,
The rider is fraught to take a tumble.

The chestnut’s sporting a unique brand,
A “Duck” that is known to riders grand.
The mark of breeding tried and true,
A line of champions who took many a blue,
In cutting pens across the nation,
That line proved worthy of their ration.

The chopper brings the herd to gather
The horses’ a foam with thick white lather
The cattle churn and swing around
Horseman move in to take up ground,

Turning their heads to point the lead
Red hides typical of the Droughtmaster breed.

The stockyard looms ahead in sight
Tired horses smell water with delight
They sense their day is coming to end,
But first the cattle they must bend.

The kelpie dog flies in for a bite,
The steer surges away in fright,
Leading the mob up into yard wings
A hearty cheer from the stock camp rings.
Stragglers are loitering slowly in,
The Lowering cows adding to the din.

The day is done, the beer is cold
It’s time to reflect on the day of old,
The fire burns bright, by the campfires light
As the Ringers sit and ponder,
The good times, they’ve spent out yonder.

They give thanks to their mates both 4 legged & 2
Knowing their bonds are strong and true,
Stockhorses of brown, chestnut and bay,
Tomorrow they’ll muster another day.

Toiling in the dry, the dust and the heat,
For there’s always another scrubber to beat!
Such is life for the stockmen bold,
It is today, like it was of old.

Unbuilding the wall

My understanding of the theme is to change my life for the better, and not the worse.

I'm doing time behind the wall waiting for the time to walk away from the walls that have taken me away from loved ones and society. I must pay my debt back to society for my wrong ways.

Keep in mind, never go back to see the judge again.

Try, try to stay inside of towing the line and not to go back to being behind the walls.

Think of the good times, but most of all think of the bad times to keep you out from behind the walls.

Free, free, freedom at last! Out from behind the walls! No more pain...

Don't look back as you leave – walk or run quickly down the drive!

No matter how long you do, you can't make up for the time you've lost with your family.

Garry B

The Wall Around My Heart

by Stuart

I prayed in my cell, on my knees. With all of my will and determination. "How could I ever not be in this mess of me?" A voice I finally heard ... he said "Stuart? where are you? I can hear you but not see ... oh it is a wall you've built around you" I called back "yeah I can hear you but not see too, what is built around me?"

Angel Michael "It's a wall Stuart you've built around your heart" a pause "you will never see me with it built so high and strong"

I answered "but Michael it's so high and so strong how can I unbuild the wall?"

Angel Michael "The same way you built it I'd guess Stu – one brick at a time."

I say "These bricks are solid! They were built from, let's see – here is one from bitterness and loss! how can I take it down Michael?"

Michael "Perhaps you could try and realize losses of people and things make way for others to come into your life so actually you will gain from this event"

I say "here Michael this one is built from fear "

Michael says "Yes it's normal to feel fear in times like that but you aren't 5 years old now, there isn't anything to be afraid now Stu, that fear is only serving to keep you away from the fun in your life, if you clutch on to that fear, you keep yourself from the good in life, unless that's what you're really fearful of?"

I say "No way Michael, I guess I hadn't thought that through. Thanks, I reckon I can put that fear brick aside"

"So, Michael what would you make of this brick ... it's made from heartache and pain it's real solid"

Angel Michael "Yes I saw that one first Stu have you ever thought maybe life is full of heartache and pains? It's the love shared and pleasures enjoyed in between we live for. This brick will keep you safe from more heartaches but prevents you from ever feeling shared love and enjoying pleasures of good company. Heartaches are part of the territory of living life and enjoying love. Perhaps you can remove this one brick too?"

I thought and thought and realised I could. Then I saw some last bricks, these would never be unbuild I expected, so I showed him these "Oi Michael, what do you make of these then? Here I was betrayed by a brother savagely "

Angel Michael “yep this one is common. A mate of mine copped a savage betrayal too, from a china plate for \$30. Just \$30 and he was given up to die, Stu betrayal needs to be accepted. Acceptance that others won’t always do as they promise is a well matured platform to stand on. It’s just the way people are. My father told me to give ‘em enough rope and see what they do. Friends, true friends, can only be found this way - they declare themselves to you over time. Betrayals are life’s way of showing you which are not your true friends. So, it’s a positive, betrayals also show who not to invest time with.

I say “Oi Michael, they were the easiest bricks. These last may not be so easy. I see they are made from hate, hurt and self-loathing how can I ever set these aside?”

Angel Michael “yes, you have many of these bricks Stu. Let’s look at one self-loathing, struth Stu, this one could be called ‘nuts’- you must be ‘nuts’ to be so hard on yourself. Expectations are a straight up route to unhappiness. Putting expectations of perfection of any kind is not very mature either. Stuart there is no such thing. One can look at a piece of fruit early on its tart, then sweet, then rank with rot. The fruit simply is all this. Same as you, you will be this, then that, then this you simply are. Accept yourself and others without expectations to be otherwise you will be unbuilding these bricks from around your heart.

Hate and hurt are mutual sides of the same function. As love builds, gives and accepts likewise the opposite hate destroys, takes and expects. Nursing hates and hurts you experience actually makes the hats and hurts stronger. I challenge you to give these last bricks to me. I will take them to my father to unburden you and leave you with this wall unbuilt final, what do you say Stu?”

I thought and thought and realised what he said was true and after giving away those last hurts and hates. I felt a lightening of my depression. My cares and worries truly eased. Unbuilding that wall was challenging and I had needed to be brave to face all those bricks again. It was so worth it though. The relief was instantaneous. I am so looking forward to the new life before me without a wall built around my heart.

There is always another mountain
It seems that I must climb
For me to reach my goal in life
But I'm running out of time

There is always another setback
That knocks me on my arse
There is always another barrier
That is so bloody hard to pass

There is always someone willing
To kick me in the head
My life has been such an awful waste
Sometimes I wish I was dead

There is always someone somewhere
Who won't let me forget my sin
Who will stand in line to judge me
Perhaps they should look within

But maybe those "someones" are just like me
Facing walls that they can't scale
But a wall once built can be unbuilt with love
And love can never fail

Lawrence

MUMMA

Dear dear Mumma,
Now that I am older,
I can see the load on your tired old shoulders.
Mumma, you're a trooper; you're a soldier.
Mumma, you mean so much to me.
You always get me out of bed
early Sunday mornings.
You take me to the church
where I learn about the Lord.
Mumma, you tried to tell me
what my life was going to be.
I was too young and wild,
and it was hard for me to see.
Mumma, I will never forget you.

Letisha

A Dog Named Beau By Amanda

Beau likes to yip and yap
And chase his tail around the flat.
He sports a sense of humour too
Beau's a cattle dog, coloured blue!

A mask of black, with pointed ears
His moniker is even on a beer!
Broad of face, with strong brown eye,
He will race the kelpies for a 2-way tie.

If there's an ankle, he loves to bite,
Giving his victims a terrible fright!
His genes are strong, he's bred to heel,
Stock are to be mastered, that's his deal.

His limitless loyalty abounds,
A most faithful of hounds,
His best mate is a boy,
And he cares not for toys.

His most favourite trick, is to take a hike
In the side-car, of the little boy's bike.
He's known to chase wheels, spinning on a dime,
He can be silly, this blue dog of mine.

Beau is my mate, he is my friend true,
I'll always be glad to own such a good blue.
He always protects me, and sees that I'm right,
Turning away strangers, with his growl and his bite.

His speckled coat he wears with pride,
And he's always up to go for a ride.
Sometimes with the horses, up the track,
Sometimes in the cab, of the rumbling Mack.

Beau came from Sydney on a plane,
He lives in a kennel, never on a chain!
His pedigree's recorded, parents tested and tried
Australian champions listed, many abide.

Papers are important, but not all to be,
Having a mate like Beau, means more to me!
There're many great trails, we've yet to travel,
There's many a life problem we've yet to unravel.

Here's to many more years with my mate Beau,
A better blue dog, I am yet to know.
Keeping watch always, even when I'm late,
I look forward each day to greeting you at the gate.

A Special Day

*It's a hot beautiful day, I'm listening to the
splashes of the waves.*

By the rocks

Releasing all the tension and anxiety

Quiet

Happy

Relaxed

*Thinking of my sister Tamara, step father and partner
hoping they are all happy and healthy*

Forever in my heart

I will remember this



By Renae

Future's Concrete

Concrete, concrete everywhere I stare.

It is so bleak and very bare like my future, this I swear.

Pacing up and down, beware though, step on a crack breaks mum's back!

Razor wire makes the fence look higher yet it holds that which I desire.

Steel and iron hold my will by design, therefore in Hell I dine.

Damian

Media Mayhem

Personification – the media as a person

By Zoe

You drag my name through the mud,
The story you tell about me isn't right, true or correct,
You have no idea on how this affects my children,
You attack me when I least expect it,
You don't know me nor do you know my story,
You print things that are out of my control,
You bully people and treat people with little or no respect,
You make people think that I'm some sort of monster

BUT.....

I will put a stop to this and silence you,
I will call you out for what you are,
No longer will you make my family and I suffer,
I will in time have my say. My story will be heard.
I will not let you win, I will have the last say

A story doesn't come without a cost.

A Short Story 4 The Long Road by Marc

I'd like to use this time to introduce the addict inside me to anyone who is listening so maybe you can get a better understanding of why I am the way I am, and why I do the things I do, and why I've done some of the things I've done. I don't know if I was born an addict but I do know the first time I got high an addict was born. First of all, you have to accept the fact that I think differently than you do. Some of this will make sense and some of this will sound like excuses that you have heard before but just know that the ones that sound like excuses are based on my fact, my perspective and the knowledge and experience of the people that are trying to help me recover. These are people I have placed my trust and faith in because all they want from me is to succeed in my mission to stay clean for another day. See you think I have a drug problem, you think I use drugs but the reality is drugs use me. Drugs take your reality from you, it becomes a nice place to visit but you don't like living there because of the constant shame and fear of letting people down or of not living up to their expectations is crippling. I put things off out of fear and anxiety and I'm called a procrastinator to me it is just a 5-syllable word for fear, ice has made me destructive pathetically and relentlessly self-destructive. Ice gave me wings and then slowly took away my sky, I looked to ice for courage and it made me a fucking coward. People say that I had always been a sensitive, perceptive, joyful and as exceptionally bright child, but on ice I became unrecognisable. They should try looking in the mirror and not knowing the reflection looking back at them, I long for the day I'm able to look in the mirror and be ok with the person I see looking back.

Like all kids when I was really young I used to think there was a monster in my closet and under my bed, and mum and dad would come into my room and reassure me that there wasn't one by opening my closet and looking under my bed, but now I'm older they can't convince me anymore, but since using ice I have come to the realisation that there is a monster, but not under my bed or in my closet but inside of me, and if I can't learn to convince myself it will destroy all of what it hasn't already. When I first got high it was pleasurable for a while, I felt I had finally experienced peace of mind silencing all the pain inside of me, but when I wore off I began to see the ugly side of my using and I experienced fucking hell. I found the higher the drugs got me the lower they brought me, after a short period of using I had 2 options either I could suffer the emotional roller coaster of withdrawal or take more drugs.

I did the withdrawal thing more times than people will ever know and its living hell. I'd make excuses for not being able to make an appearance for whatever the occasion may be, I even missed my own family members funerals or ran late because of my addiction and if and when I did make it I was unable to grieve - it was fucking horrible now I look back. I didn't want to use anymore and I hated who I had become - you would think that after experiencing the physical and emotional pain of withdrawal and the destroying consequences of using that I would never put myself through that again, right? See that's how people see it, but for me it just become part of my using and a consequence I was willing to pay. People call that insanity, I call it life.

I looked at myself as a failure as a complete waste of space, but I never failed to fail because my addiction always came first. People make the mistake of thinking that recovery is simply a matter of not using, and they consider a relapse a sign of complete failure and long periods of abstinence a complete success, but these are simplistic perceptions. My life is anything but simple and I'm not just talking about my drug use. The way my mind works, nothing is as easy as just doing it because my mind tries to convince me not to do it. My mind also likes to make every little thing that goes wrong with my recovery a major crisis. They say a mind is a terrible thing to waste, my mind is a terrible thing to listen to. Most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be, mine won't let me be happy, it's been neglected of love self-love. It's really difficult to solve a problem with the same mind that created it. I've created a lot of problems for myself from abusing ice - after everything I have just said, believe me when I say this. I Do not want to be an addict.

Beyond the Wall – By Letisha

We have walls and barriers everywhere we turn in life

It's how we deal with them, how to find the best way through

A lot of different paths we can take

We just need to stop, think and decide before we choose our path,

What will it lead us into?

We live once; it can be hard to know right from wrong, and

how to face our challenges.

We are only human – we live and learn as we travel through life

Choices – we can only hope we make the right ones, but if we don't, only you can be the one to
fix that

Our past gives us the knowledge which helps us in the future,

And with forgiveness, makes the approaching road we take easier to face.

You can't turn back time, but you can turn your life around, and be free.



Independence

By Amanda

There is empowerment in a decision, that you alone did make.
Self-Belief to uphold and honour, the chances and risks you take.
There is internal strength to be found, have the courage to walk alone,
There're Many walls you will scale, and skills that you must hone.

There is the fear of repercussions, and a fear of failures too.
These hinderances must be surmounted, if independence is coming to you.
Success is yours to celebrate, lessons to learn, heed your mistakes,
All are paths on your journey, to independence, that you must partake.

Knowing the disappointment, when you try, yet fail,
Having faith in yourself to stand back up, courage that does not pale.
Freedom of speech to express yourself, to be allowed to have your say,
Respected for your opinion, not be oppressed, bullied or told "nay".

To have the choice to work, or be a mother if you choose,
If decisions are forced by others, your independence you do lose.
The ability to spend your monies, how and as you wish,
Responsibilities to attend too, the opportunity to experience life's dish.

Freedom to choose your friends, and the company you wish to keep
Not be kept from achieving your dreams, they shouldn't only exist in your sleep
The right to choose "who" walks beside you, independence does not mean "alone"
Together you could conquer mountains, tearing down internal walls of stone.

Independence is about knowing, you have the right to choose
To know you have that right, but also knowing not to abuse
The rewards, responsibilities, and repercussions, lay squarely at our feet
Our hearts and heads to guide us, on life's decisions that we must meet.

Unbuilding the Wall

Life has many walls it's true,
Some are success stories, some are just blue,
Each wall has its pieces that form every part
Some Walls are built, to protect the heart.

Walls are barriers each of us form
Some are necessary to help us weather Storms
Some are like a prison, keeping us a slave
Some are our confidence, helping us be brave.
There are walls that simply cannot be unbuilt.
And some that at windmills, we tend to tilt
There are walls that are unyielding, set in stone
And Walls we must learn to unbuild, often alone.

Walls can allow us, the peace of life's solitude
Walls can inhibit us, from discovering our aptitude
Walls are often barriers we choose to hide behind
We can be coaxed to unbuild them, by someone being kind

Some walls exist, between persons of differing race
Others may depend, on your religion or birth place
There is often a divide, between City and the Bush
Minimal is the cross-over when it comes to the push.

Walls are often built by us, as a measure to survive
Often a daily struggle, we must try, and always strive
Forever to overcome those walls, those obstacles we place
In our life's paths, by the challenges we must face

Walls form our many experiences, our hopes and our fears
Tearing them down can be a journey, sodden by many tears
Each person has their own method for tearing down their wall
Hold your head up while you do it, and walk forever tall.

For the journey is your own to take, every step is your own
Listen to your heart, and you'll know where to place the stones.

Walls can be unbuilt, and new ones formed too,
Only you will know, what is appropriate for you.

Amanda

Parole Hopes

By Kylie

My past, present and future.

I'm 39, and have many children.

For as long as I remember, my vicious addiction to ice has had control over my life. The result has been experiencing domestic violence, and losing custody of many of my children. Being addicted led me to do anything for that hit, which finally brought me before the courts.

Pleading guilty, meant I accepted what the law gave me - a four year, 3 month term with options for parole after 2.

I have now served that initial period, and
in a short time, will sit before my parole board.

Am I nervous? Oh boy, I am.

This time has given me so much time to self-reflect, leading me to realise that a big change is in order. Firstly, I want to become the best version of myself! I want to be;

∞ A drug-free mother, daughter, sister and friend, helping others and depending on no one but myself for happiness

∞ To rebuild relationships with my beautiful children; I have seen them very few times throughout the past couple of years - that alone has taken a lot of strength to accept.

For this reason, I have undertaken many support programs to help bring this closer to happening. I have people waiting for me and needing me to be there so I really hope to be able to get out and jump into that come my due date

My last comment is that if drugs have taught me anything, it would be that all it does is help you to lose everything you once had. It tears families apart in a split second, with no turning back

My sentence served, I plan to go out these gates and walls a better person. I believe that with a clear mindset, you can change and reshape your life

Although the future scares me, I know I can smash the goals I've set for myself.

Am I proud? Not yet, but I can't wait for the day I can truthfully say yes.

Bring it on.

MIND OVER MATTER

Feel I'm up again,
Feels so incredible.
Fell down and got back up again,
Standing high and tall.
Stumbled, came around again.
Slept, woke up and believed.
Started all over.

Letisha

My thoughts



By Anita

In my mind I am at a campfire
feeling the atmosphere
enjoying the fresh air
I see my grandchildren pottering around
no fear, no anxiety, not alone.
Someone to be a companion in the future
When the wall is gone, I would like to find
a sense of purpose, maybe volunteering, or
doing something with people.

One day, I will find that place

Letters to Ken

Perhaps it was fate that saw us cross paths
We shared many stories, and more than a few laughs.
The wheels of our trucks criss-crossed the state
The rules of the road, leading us to become mates.

For past choices made, I was sentenced to jail.
With sadness I posted you, the news in the mail.
In truth I had doubted, I'd receive a reply,
Your letter did come thou, leaving me on a high!

You apologised profusely, for mistakes in your letter
Told me to keep safe, that the future would be better
Admitted skills were rusty, to read and to write,
Told me to stay positive, that I'd be "alright".

A photo included, of your last logging truck,
Your words uplifting, when I was down on my luck.
A letter filled with warmth, left me with a smile,
Written from the heart, in your own unique style.

A reply was composed, I had painted your truck!
I shared many things that had brought me unstuck.
A letter filled with sadness, reflecting my pain,
Written with my tears, that fell like the rain.

I mentioned my studies, shared my drawings and art,
A great many things, I wrote with my heart.
In reply, your letters always brought me a smile,
Reflecting memories made, traversing many of life's mile.

Stories of the horses, you'd known to ride,
And many of the trucks, in which you took pride
We spoke of the stations, where we'd both been,
Of the wonderful people, and places we'd seen.

Many photos I shared, of my horses and foals,
Stories of my childhood, my hopes and my goals,
Every one of your letters, expressed kindness and hope,
Each letter inspired, and helped me to cope.

Your letters always came, each week without fail,
I eagerly anticipated, the daily arrival of mail.
Some letters I typed, yours were written by hand
Both filled with our memories, of working the land.
I shared my talent, of writing and rhyme,
The many poems and stories, I composed with my time,
In each one a message, there was a point to convey,

All painted a picture, of a life far away.

Through many letters shared, our friendship would grow
Writing giving each of us, opportunities to bestow
A courtship via letters, was incredibly sweet
Always respectful, and remaining discrete.

Our words came easy, the conversations would flow,
Your name at the bottom, always kisses below.
One day I got brave, and sent you a heart,
Your next letter reciprocating, with a drawing to impart.

A heart handwritten, on the last page of your letter,
The contents as always, inspiring me to do better,
Your words always bring kindness, encouraging me to try
You helped mend broken wings, reminding me how to "fly".

Each letter now, reflects a future to behold,
Many stories we've shared, some yet to be told.
There are many of life's paths, we've yet to walk together
There will be many storms, we have yet to weather.

I'll always be glad that I took a chance,
Sometimes to the music, in our hearts we must dance.
I've loved stars too fondly, to ever fear the night.
I look forward to your smile, and arms to hold me tight.

I raise a glass to acknowledge, all of life's trials,
To all the bumps in the road, the many dusty miles,
That make up the pages, form the chapters in life's book,
The trials and tribulations, and the risk that I took.

Your letters brought me hope, and relief from solitude,
Sometimes my replies, were filled with sassy attitude.
A cheeky sense of humour, sometimes was at play
A special place in my heart, you have come to stay.

I say "thanks" for the letters, you took the time to write,
They brought me hope and comfort, even on the darkest night.
A new chapter is beginning, that we'll write with our hearts,
Perhaps it was pre-destined, right from the very start.

"Thanks" Ken, for your letters, your friendship, your love, for helping me mend my broken wings, and for always encouraging me to "fly".

All my love,



A.M xoxo.

CHANGE

A short story by Kianna

To quite a few people in my life the word change is meaningless. It is just another word, where as to me change is everything. It is a fresh start. It is mine and my son's future. It is saying hello to new beginnings and goodbye to my past lifestyle and old ways. It is making sure I become the best possible version of myself. It is giving my son the life he deserves and making sure he has a happy and healthy lifestyle in a loving, caring and welcoming home. It is staying away from violent relationships and focusing on my son and myself. It is making peace with childhood events that I had no control over.

Now let's just take a step back into how my life used to be. For as long as I remember I have lived somewhat of a crazy lifestyle, some would say. I have always loved the thrill of owning copious amounts of drugs, firearms and even stolen goods. At one point in my life I felt that type of thing was what my life goals were based around, which I had somewhat accomplished. Sounds ridiculous I know, but I truly did love going out and breaking the law. Yeah luckily, I got away with it therefore sat back and laughed. The thing is I didn't even need to do the burglary's, I had more money I could spend at the time. I guess it was yet again all for the thrill of it.

Unfortunately, in the 11 years of living that lifestyle I didn't realise the effect it could have on mine and my son's life's. I didn't realise what it would result in if nothing changed. I had no idea how quickly my life could take a turn. I was always in and out of court, my priors are thicker than this book I am currently writing in. I didn't realise my freedom would so easily be taken. I didn't realise I would be away from my son and family for longer than ever before. I didn't realise I would lose time I could never get back. If it wasn't clear enough already yes, my past finally caught up with me. An empty, cold, bare jail cell was my new bedroom. For the next 6 months Mary Hutchinson's women's prison was my temporary home. I had no idea what to expect. I had never been to jail before so it was scary walking out into a yard full of women I had never met. The come down got the better of me so I was bed bound for quite some time. But after that I began getting closer and closer to many of the girls as time passed by. Before long I had made close friends with many of them.

Now that I have a small insight of the months leading up to today I can go back to when I realised my life needed a huge transforming change. It was only recently. Not a particular day or time. I didn't just wake up one day and realise that from this day forward I am going to make a massive change in life or anything. More like all throughout the past 5 months I have come to realise many things. I have gone from planning a wedding, to being single. Gone

from having more than enough money in my savings to being dead broke. Gone from having more friends than I could handle, to a little few. Gone from having many assets to none. Gone from spending every day with little boy, to only seeing him 4 times in 5 months. Possibly just 3 times now I think about it. I won't mention everything that's changed or that I have lost, because I'd be writing forever. But now you get the gist I'll continue

You know, I used to blame everyone else for all that but truthfully, I am the only one to blame! Do you want to know one valuable lesson the criminal life taught me? It was that no matter what you owned in life, how much money you had or how many nice things you have displayed in your home you could lose it all quicker than the words 'stuff the police' would come out of your mouth! And trust me, receipts or not you aren't seeing any of that shit again. That is why very few criminals continuously succeed in life whereas those who make an honest living do. Don't get me wrong I have been extremely lucky in many cases, but regardless I have finally grown up and realised change is in order before my life takes a turn that I will not be able to recover from.

My main goal in life is to do my son, mother and my brother (whom is watching over me) proud. 2 years ago, I hit rock bottom. I hit the drugs harder than ever before. I was attempting to block out the grief from losing my brother. Still to this day I have a huge part of guilt inside me for his death. He tragically took his own life, unfortunately due to not changing my ways in life we drifted further apart than ever before and got to the point of no longer talking. You know I can't help but wonder if I was there for him when he needed me the most would he still be here? Let me tell you it's one hell of a burden to carry. But that in itself is enough to see a change is top priority. Another reason is the risk of losing custody of my child, in which I would never be able to forgive myself for. It is true what they say you don't know what you have till it's gone.

In less than a months' time I get my freedom back. Am I excited? No, actually I am the complete opposite. My life is about to completely change into something I am far from used to. A life I don't know and oh boy, am I scared. I am walking out the gates to a drug free, criminal free life without a partner. Without all of the things I once had. Trying to start a career of my dreams after what could be years of study. I am lucky to have supportive family and my amazing son on the other side waiting. It is going to be one windy, long-arse road but if I keep the finish line at the end, in arms reach and keep a strong mindset, then I can do it. I am excited to see where life takes me and I long for the day I can finally say I truly made it. Am I proud? No not yet. But I can't wait for the day I can truthfully answer with a yes. Stay tuned change is on its way.

I am "ME"

By Amanda

I am **KIND**, because I have known meanness

I am **LOYAL**, because I have experienced dishonesty

I am **EMPATHETIC**, because I have been denied empathy

I am **GENEROUS**, because I have known selfishness

I am **BRAVE**, because I have tasted fear

I am **HAPPY**, because I have suffered sadness

I am **SELFLESS**, because I have encountered greed

I am **SMART**, because I have made mistakes

I am **SWEET**, because I have seen bitterness

I am **BEAUTIFUL**, because I see beauty in every thing

I am **HUMBLE**, because I have achieved great things

I am **LOVING**, because I have been denied love

I am **PATIENT**, because I have endured rashness

I am **MOTIVATED**, because I refuse procrastination

I am **DECISIVE**, because I have been plagued by doubts

I am **INSIGHTFUL**, because I have watched people be blind

I am **FOCUSSED**, because I've learned to ignore distractions

I am **SYMPATHETIC**, because I have been denied sympathy

I am **ETHICAL**, because I've seen values not upheld

I am **CREATIVE**, because I've had nothing but imagination to inspire

I am **FORGIVING**, because I have earned self-peace in forgiveness

I am STRONG, because I know "what" I am,



I am "ME"



Magic Lies Within

By Amanda

I sit pensively in the 3 x 3 cell, my gaze turned out the window, although it is night, and the view is masked in darkness and shadow, it matters not, as my eyes are seeing far away, they are not in this room. I am Not even close to this place. The view out the window is uninspiring, even in daylight, the Razor wire and chain mesh in the distance mark the perimeter of the prison I am incarcerated in, the harsh bright light cascades down from the Spotlights overhead that illuminate every shadow in the yard and block out the stars behind that I yearn to see, for I know they are there, shining brightly, behind the glare of the spotlights. If only the night was dark, just for a few minutes, so I could see the stars once more. It is never truly dark here, no matter how late the hour.

I sigh, the hour is late, but I prefer to work now, when silence has descended on the prison, less chance of being interrupted at this hour. No wardens to issue errands, no noisy inmates coming and going, no sirens, no courses for reformatory to attend, just welcome silence. It is something you take for granted on the farm, and something you learn to do without in prison, silence and privacy are two things hard to come by. It has been 4 months of this routine, and 4 months have yet to pass, before that yearning for the dark of the night and the brightness of the stars will be fulfilled, for I will see the stars again, uninhibited by the artificial light of the spot lights in the yard. In four months, I will walk out of this place, never to return, that much I have promised myself over and over.

It is a lonely existence here, for the farm girl who spent every waking hour outside, the restrictions of freedom to a 3 x 3 cell came very hard indeed. Outside there were always things to do, never enough hours in a day, inside you have to come up with ways to get rid of the time that marches so incredibly slowly by, each day dragging to feel like a month, time does not pass quickly in this place, and the animals, job, and friends I knew and loved are far far away. How were the Springing Heifers coming along? I ponder, they would be dropping calves now, no doubt Mum would be checking them through the night in case one needed assistance. I smile, picturing my Kelpie "Charlie" clinging to the motor bike as they did the rounds of the heifers at night, ready to spring into excited barking action at a word from Mum, to deter a furious Mother Cow from charging the bike while her calf was checked and dually marked. Charlie loved her job, lived for it, no matter the hour, day or night, she was on the job and ready to work. Many a day, Charlie was the only other face I would see as I went about my work, and yet, never was I lonely, not like in here surrounded by people I neither felt comfortable with, or relate too. This is not my world, and I do not belong here, it is but a passage of time, a pause, before the pages turn and a new chapter begins.

The mare would be getting close to foaling now, for spring was just starting, and the foal was due early September, would it be a colt or a filly? I would be happy with either, the mare "Mahsahti" is Purebred Arabian, the stallion "Troubadour" is well proven as a sire and nationally performed. In 5 years' time I hope this foal will carry me to a long coveted Tom Quilty Buckle, a 100 Mile race that is the pinnacle of the sport, the future foal taking the same path as it's Dam and Sire before, to be champions at Long Distance Endurance riding. I allowed a smile as I thought of the name chosen for the as yet unborn foal, "Maserati", it seemed appropriate for a long-distance race horse, the combination of sleek design, Power, and Speed. That is the future, but first the baby foal must be born.

Canvas' lay spread about the room, painted with scenes from farming, with sheep spreading out to graze beneath a towering windmill. The faces of working dogs stare bright eyed and animated back off the canvas, their yellow eyes attentive and ears pricked awaiting instruction. On another, horses gallop the skyline at sunset, the sky illuminated in reds and pinks as the sun slips behind the red hills, everything bathed in the soft evening glow of twilight.

The cattle graze contentedly along the river flats, under towering snow-capped mountains, on another the Windmill stands alone in a paddock of swaying golden grasslands, as the monsoon storm rolls in with its heavy rains in the distance. Seascapes with crashing waves and white beaches, sunsets, and sturdy lighthouses are also to be seen among the collection of paintings that litter the cell floor, hundreds of hours of work have materialised on canvas.

The paint brush strokes fall and dip, as the painting comes to life before my hand, another scene from my memory fills the canvas, this time it is of my stockhorse, his liquid brown eyes staring back at me, with loyalty and trust. The magic unfolds as the hours pass, transported from mind to canvas, as the figures and landscapes take place through the art.

There maybe no stars here, but I can paint the stars. There maybe no mountains, no forests of whispering trees, no eager sharp-eyed kelpies dashing around the sheep, no cattle grazing quietly by the river, no waves pounding the shoreline, and no moon rising behind the windmill as we check the heifers late at night, but all of that becomes real through my artwork. When I paint, I am no longer "here" in this 3 x 3 room, which shows no expression, no warmth, and is but geography of the body only, instead I am transported "there" to where my brush paints, flying away over the perimeter fence, away from the Guards, away from the announcing systems, and the ceaseless chatter of voices, away from the numbered orderly routines and lines, no longer wearing the drab prison clothes and instead, blue jeans and a wide brimmed hat are now my uniform, as I ride my horse along the foothills, his hooves barely register a sound as they tread upon a carpet of leaves, and the wind whispers my name as it curls down off the mountains towering above, blowing my horses mane and my hair to mingle and become one. The magic, of surviving this place, lies within, the beauty of the paintings in stark difference to the sterile environment I sit in... I am not here, I am never here in this place, for while I can paint, the magic lies within, and where the wind has blown me over the many years gone by, I now recreate through my brush, many hours spent in quiet reflection and attention to detail to bring to life my memories of times gone before and those yet to come.

Freedom is not a physical thing, jail has taught me that, no one can physically take your freedom, that is just physical geography. Freedom is a state of mind, and through my magic of painting, I am forever, free. In truth I have been many times throughout my life more a prisoner whilst never being in "jail" then I have since being incarcerated, both through the actions of other people, and at other times through grief and being a prisoner to myself, the mind can be a torment at these times. All these things you learn as you turn life's pages, and as such, so all things come to pass, good and bad, like the seasons in farming, good follows bad, rain follows drought, spring follows winter. The magic of survival, always lies within yourself. This period of incarceration, too will pass, and the stars will light the path once more, in the next chapter in this book called life.



City and the Bush

Amanda

There exists within the nation, an ever-widening divide
Opinions vary greatly, both parties have their sides
Difficulties exist, in finding the common ground
The comparisons are few, the lack of similarity profound

The city buys its groceries, wrapped in plastic from the store
Milk comes in differing cartons, variation in types galore
Vegetables are presented, in uniform shapes and size
Meat is neatly cut and diced, its animal origin disguised

The shopper rarely understands, the work that was devoted
By the farmer in producing, the products being promoted
To understand the toil spent, in both cold and heat
The toll they must face, and the debts that they must meet.

Farmers can be found, before the sun has come to rise
Feeding animals, and checking irrigation, persevering and wise
They know the many pitfalls that can come to pass
That could halt a harvest, or prevent stock making the class

There is many a hurdle, the City dweller must understand
That stands between the shop produce, and the producer on the land.
There are long and dusty years, of never-ending drought.
That the farmer faces unwavering, for he mustn't ever doubt

That the long-awaited rains, will soon come to fall
He only hopes it will be soon, before the banker comes to call
The price of grain has risen steeply, he needs to feed his cattle
The bore is almost dry now, the tank only yields a rattle.

The vegetable crop is dismal, the wheat looks sure to fail
The many perils of farming, with mounting bills in the mail
The supermarket determines, the species and variety of fruit,
Those that were popular last summer, are now given the 'boot'

The milk price in the supermarket, continues to decline
The price paid to the farmer, a steeply sliding incline
Those apples on the shelves, were paid for by the tonne
The mark-up is substantial, when the kg price is rung

The City dweller could be forgiven, for assuming profits are passed down
To the producer of these products, that are seen on the shelves in town
When in fact the margin that exists, is actually quite slim
Any produce not meeting size and shape, is regulated to the bin
The 4wd the farmer drives, is often looked upon with greed
The city doesn't understand, this vehicle is bought only for need.
There would be little place, in a muddy paddock or lane
For the Commodore or Hatchback, if you want to make it home again

The clothes that are worn, are seen as sporting many a patch
Most City people would have, only treated them with a match
They are not aimed at meeting fashion, or making an impression
Instead of buying new ones, they feed their stock and avoid depression.

It must be understood, that the farmer wants not your pity
He chooses to live on the land, and has no wish to join the city
He lives for each day, he devotes his time upon the land
Fulfilment gained from your cattle, eating grain from your hand.

The farmer knows the seasons, he knows the good and bad
Often the farm he is working, was passed down from his Dad
Generations of his family have tended these ever-rewarding lands
He hopes that his grandchildren, will have that same soil on their hands

There are animals to be tended, whether you are sick or cold
There are cows to be milked, there is hay to go in the hold
The grain needs to be harvested, sent to the mill to make flour
There are paddocks to be prepared, on the tractor no matter the hour.

The animals that he tends too, in them he takes great pride
He knows their personalities, and admires their glossy hides
Their breeding is recorded, in many a thick stud book
Genetics carefully protected, to produce only the best for the hook

There are often years of labour, that go into what you see,
Awareness among the city folk, is the essential key
Helping to unbuild the wall, that exists between farm and city
Farmers need your support and awareness, but not your pity.

It is important to understand, the farmers sense of pride
For each and every thing produced, everything we provide
Is done so with commitment, out of heart and desire
Although undoubtedly there are jobs, that would pay much higher

So, help unbuild the wall that exists, between the City and Bush
It takes insight and understanding, and perhaps a little push
Salute our working farmers, who toil our wide brown land
Tip your hat and say G'day, be aware and hold up your hand.

Put your voices to good use, and support Australian Grown
If you don't then soon it will be hard, to find a brand our own.
Our farmers are our life blood, to be held in high regard
Respect them toiling in the fields, and tending in their yards.

Next time you see a farmer, tip your hat and say hello
When you drive the country, and hear the cattle bellow
Remember the stock in the paddocks, are raised to be your meat
The bread you ate this morning, came from that paddock of wheat

When pondering a bottle of milk to buy, try and support the brand
That pays directly back to farmers, try and lend a hand
Support the Australian Farmer, and buy only our home grown.
Forgo the cheap imported products, and support our own.

Through education we must seek, to tear down the divided wall
That is seen to exist, but which we mustn't allow at all
Strive to unbuild the wall, that divides the city from the bush
All we need is some understanding, and a little push.

Amanda

People, Minds and Weirdos

Where have all the women gone
Are they still around or not
More men on earth again
I wonder if that's a bad thing
Sounds like 1978 a little
A voice reply's
I think it was more women then
Too many in prison I guess
Another voice replied
This ISLAND I am on has too many
Said another
I hope to socialize someone else said
Help the world live again and people
Replied Storm boy
We could probably study individuals all well
Said another old man
Because it's only psychology, the little man said
Or the workings of the mind and understanding the psych
Thought's, etcetera
Said the educated man
And watching people live on earth, after teaching them to live
On earth which is sociology
The basics another voice replied
And if I'm lucky enough to have a garden
The weirdo said
I would love to watch it grow
Said little Patrick
Sweet peas, lettuce's, pumpkin's, tomato's
Always the easiest to grow, butternut and grey's
The only pumpkin's for me.

Patrick

Fatty the Kelpie

Fatty is my kelpie, she's coloured red and tan,
Her coat is darkest chocolate, her markings gold like sand.
She has a touch of red heeler, with speckles on her feet,
She's a bold and silent worker, few cattle chance to beat.

Born on flat King Island, out on Bass Straight
She became my constant shadow, and my closest mate.
Never a day would come to pass, without her by my side,
No job would ever daunt her, whether we walk or ride.

She gained the valued skills, of a good working dog,
The paddocks were a marsh, the laneways a muddy bog,
Always a diligent worker, however long the day
A few bickies in a bowl at night, all she asks for her pay.

Fatty loves to ride upon, the 4-wheel motor bike
She uses her deep voice, and she loves to skite!
You can ask her a question, and she will reply,
With loud assertive bark, and nose pointed to the sky!

There's many a mountain, Fatty has helped me climb,
We've ridden for hours, with no care to the time.
Falling in behind, my horses' trotting heels,
Unless redirected, then away she wheels.

She will stand hard eyed, to head off the orneriest steer,
Then join me silently, for an end of work day beer.
She sits up in front, when we take out the ute,
The kids down at school, think she's rather beaut.

Fatty is loyal, she is wise and true,
Fatty always lifts me, when I'm feeling blue.
Fatty had a litter, a few years ago,
And along came "Charlie" looking just like Fatty you know!

Fatty's bright yellow eyes are tinged with brown,
Her shoulders laid back, her body rather round.
Her brown ears erect, listening always for a que,
An ear is always cocked, keeping track of you.

Fatty has enjoyed, lately a life of leisure
Indulging in many treats, that award her much pleasure.
She's been known to steal the butter, and even the bread,
Once it was a pot roast, which she consumed upon my bed!

Fatty is well travelled, she's been throughout the state.
She's walked, ridden, driven and flown, always as my mate.
Fatty has a following, even her own Facebook page,
She appeared once in a play, upon a school stage.

Fatty's growing older now, her muzzle is turning grey.
Though still she runs the mountain trails, when I ride the bay.
Charlie looks just like her, fleet footed and loyal of heart,
Of these two chocolate kelpies, only death will see me part.

She's owned a piece of my soul, since first she joined the earth,
She'll forever hold place in my heart, always a warm spot by the hearth.
Some say she is only a dog, but as yet I have not seen,
A more loyal or faithful companion, than that red kelpie has been.

The shadows are growing longer, summer is drawing near,
I look forward to riding the mountains, crossing the streams clear.
At my side will pace my kelpies, both shaded in chocolate browns,
Our shadows and souls blended as one, horse, human and hounds.

If you've never known the love of a dog, I pity you my friend,
For they will put back together, parts you never know how to mend.
With paws that pad beside you, a gentle lick to your hand,
With love and loyalty undivided, they'll follow you across the land.

Amanda

The Wild Places

Sometimes I sit and ponder, the places I have been
The plains that I have wandered, the mountains I have seen.
Memories flash before me, of lakes coloured in crystal blues
And those sun kissed hills yonder, tipped with golden hues

Sunsets that stretched across the sky, as far as the eye could see
Of the monsoon storm rolling in, across the plain towards me
I've stood and watched the mighty cloud, that forms the Morning Glory
Coming in across the Gulf, the Fishermen tell her story.

I've crossed the dry red deserts, that sprawl out across the land
I've handled the rich volcanic earth, and let it fall from my hand
The freezing mountain rivers, that crash their way down the mountain,
White waters whipping up a frenzy, the waterfall's cascading fountain

The Islands of the north, sporting palm trees and golden sand
Feel the ferocity of the cyclone, as its winds whip across land
I've tailed great mobs of cattle out, across the endless golden plains
And directed my hardy stockhorse through muddy bogs, and lanes

The windmill standing solitary, is an essential part of life
Pumping artesian water, to run out, would mean great strife
The deep lagoons of the northern rivers, can be a welcome delight
I've swum my horses in them, and bathed on a moonlit night

I've watched the cane fields burning, watched the flames leap high in the night
The smell of molasses hangs heavy, the small animals fleeing in fright
I've fought the raging bushfires, that race hot and fast across the fields
And walked through a wheat crop, while the farmer marvelled at his yields

In harmony I have sat, before a campfire burning bright
And counted the many stars above, that filled the sky at night
Across this brown country I've travelled, beneath the southern cross
I've seen paddocks turned to dust, and mourned the farmers' loss

There is nothing quite so forbidding, as the swirling of the dust storm
Nor little as awe-inspiring as watching a world re born
When the wet season brings its magic, with wide spread soaking rain
Then the bush is filled with music, when everything turns green again

I've climbed over snowy mountains, been dazzled by their snow
The ice has spun its magic, freezing the river in its flow

I've fished a mountain stream, and ridden a dry creek bed
Sometimes I had but only, the hard-dry earth to lay my head.

I've wandered a southern forest, where the trees tower high above
I've travelled many places, and all I've come to love
There are all these beautiful places, so many I have seen
I left only footprints, to show where I have been.

On horse-back I have travelled, venturing wide and far
I've visited sprawling cites, but prefer a country bar
Then northern winds come a-calling, they whisper my name
Always calling me back there, to the places I became
Part of that wild country, that is carried in my heart,
I will remember fondly, each and every part.

These are remote and wild places, each are so unique
My heart will wander back to, followed by my feet
No matter where I journey, where life's trail may lead
I will never forget them, they are part of the blood I bleed.

There is a certain peace, to be found where these places are,
To know it, is to have a gift, as priceless as a star
There are many wild places, I have yet to roam,
Wherever I may wander, they will always feel like home.

Amanda

Learning to Fly

Life's road wouldn't mean so much, without its twists and turns
The many obstacles we overcome, the emotions that it churns
The road was often fettered, with moments of fear and pain
There were those whose only input, was for their own self-gain

There were times the problem, seemed never to go away
And on others it was resolved, with breaking of the day
The journey has been a rough one, the personal cost was dear
There was over a decade, 'imprisoned' by cohesion and fear.

A person who had sought to control, every thought and move
Through fear and intimidation, their actions were to prove
I had lost my right to speak, my body no longer my own
The shame of admitting failure, prevented picking up the phone.

The bruises often went unnoticed, eventually they'd fade
That's until the next time, when they were again re-laid
Walking on a tight rope, the slightest thing could trigger
Another angry explosion, it seemed each time they were bigger

There were threats to insist, that I always towed the line
If I'd paid more attention, maybe I'd have seen some sign
The control crept slowly upon you, caught you unaware
Recognition was too late; obedience, required only a stare.

There were others to consider, children to be protected
You took little notice, of the papers that were directed
To maintain the peace and order, not to stalk or abuse
The violence however continued, I had no power to refuse

One day I came to realise, I was nothing more than a slave
Emotionally and physically, I'd been bullied to behave
My friends no longer came around, my family were all gone
All was carefully orchestrated, my outlook was forlorn

My many life achievements, were touted as a fail
I'd become a prisoner, without ever going to jail
It was many years later, before I came to see
The debilitating effect, that you had on me.

One day I gained the courage, to walk out that door
Nevermore you'd stand over me, cowering on the floor
It was time to find myself again, I'd a life to re-build
I'd been too long suppressed, a life lived unfulfilled

My wings were in tatters, my voice had grown small
There were plenty of times I wondered, if I'd recover at all.
Time healed the scars and bruises, that laid upon the skin

Learning to have courage, and to share your trust
It takes time and patience, but you know you must
It is part of the healing, the internal scars that exist
Take longer to recover, then those caused by a fist

With each small achievement, my confidence began to rise
I learned to hold a conversation, without dropping my eyes
I formed friendships and learned laughter, I knew joy once more
With perseverance I was becoming, the person I was before

The road I'd walked was lonely, often I walked alone
I had to rebuild bridges, deciding where to lay the stone
My tattered wings grew feathers, growing stronger by the day
I was learning to fly again, I'd learned I *could* have a say.

It takes courage and resilience, to overcome those fears
Learning to fly again, is accompanied by many tears
There are parts that are broken, some will not ever mend
There are new joys and love to ponder, opportunities to tend

My wings were never broken, of that I can now see
They were simply clipped, the power now lies with me
To learn to unfold those wings, and learn to fly once more,
To overcome the sadness, and learn to close that door

My future is much brighter, I am now truly free you see
With my mended wings I'm able, to be what I *can* be
The lessons go not unheeded, I am wiser, but still kind
While learning forgiveness, a strength I have come to find

That strength has made me stronger, it has given me back my wings
It has given me resilience, and allowed me to let go of things
It's given me courage and self- belief, that choices are my own
Through life's many challenges, that I have over-thrown.

People often think of freedom, as in a physical sense
Indeed, being restricted, comes with emotions immense
I have learned that freedom, maybe different for us all
It matters not where you live, its about unbuilding the wall

The walls that we come to build, that impede our flight
We must learn to overcome, regardless of our plight
We can learn to set aside, that which clips our wings
Then we learn the value, of what freedom really brings.

I will now wander, with eyes turned to the sky
I am now stronger, for I have re-learned to fly.
I now understand, what it truly means to be free
In finding courage to fly again, I have found life's key.

Amanda

Eventually The Wall's Gonna Come Down

Wish I'd paid more attention at school
Easily distracted quick to play the fool
Too embarrassed to ask for help
So played up, in spite of myself
Finally, I've found the willpower to do it. I'm gonna kick this thing
I want to connect with my family through words
Take charge of my future, find my true worth

Every year, court then jail
Gotta change, I want to sail
I want to be in my own crowd..
I want to lead, not follow
Something life-giving, not bloody hollow
Out of the past, we can make a better future
Nobody's perfect
Everyone deserves a second chance, a more positive picture
We need to remember;
The wall does eventually come down

Our release date will come

Bobby

