

Prose

Poetry

News

and more!

fall & winter 2023

#3



BRIDGES

Presented by:

Bklyn
Public Library

Justice
Initiatives

Letter from the Editors

Hello!

The Justice Initiatives team at Brooklyn Public Library is happy to present our latest issue of *Bridges*, a zine for our incarcerated neighbors throughout New York.

This is a special issue for us. In addition to our regular news, health and wellness, games and resources sections, we are including, for the first time, some great writing from incarcerated authors. We have five poems and an essay from writers who have contributed to PEN America's annual prison writing contest. We hope that you enjoy these pieces as much as we did when we read them.

We also hope that they will inspire you in your own writing and creativity. To that end, we are extremely happy to announce that *we will now be accepting submissions from incarcerated writers and artists!*

If you have poetry, essays, short stories, drama pieces or visual art that you would like to see in the pages of *Bridges*, we'd love to hear from you. Please see the following page for submission guidelines.

In solidarity,

Justice Initiatives at
Brooklyn Public Library

How to Submit Writing and Art

- » Poems, stories and essays can be typed or hand-written.
- » Please be careful to keep a copy of your work and please provide a return address where we can reach you, including your legal name and ID number, and your pen name, if you'd like to use one. We will make every effort to return your submission, either to you, or to an outside contact if you provide us with an address.
- » If you don't want us to return your work, we will archive it at the library.
- » You may submit up to six poems, up to two essays or stories, or up to four pieces of visual art.
- » Submission deadlines are rolling, but we anticipate publishing a total of four issues in 2023, in March, June, September, and December.
- » If selected, we will write to you to let you know and to set up payment. We are able to offer a \$100 honorarium for each published poem, story, essay or artwork.

Thank you so much in advance, we can't wait to see your submissions.

Send submissions to:

Justice Initiatives-Bridges Zine
Brooklyn Public Library, Outreach Services
10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 1123



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Sunset Over Manhattan from Brooklyn Bridge, by Bill Powers
 Bill Powers photograph collection, Brooklyn Public Library,
 Center for Brooklyn History

A Prison Ball-game

by Jeff Young

Turkey vultures chandelier
the prison yard.
A pitch of hope arches
towards sun faceted sky.
Life's gravity leads to its decline.
Half revolutions spit
softballs into razor wire guarding
the blue tapestry. We unravel
and watch the last home run.

A slide, sandstorm, sand-burn, sand
between the toes. One the diamond
grounds, prison souls
are as free as the feathered ones
who scope for prey. An AR-15

perched on an American flag
tattooed-forearm of a guard
makes revolutions 'round
the edge of our world,

patiently awaiting an opportunity
to buzzard-food
the men below.

The Jury's In...

by Deb Nicholls

What is the "bombest" dish you've made while
in prison? *Canteen/package ingredients only

12. Pasta Salad (w/chic, bacon, or Italian)
11. Homemade Green Chili
10. Chicken Parmesan
09. Reeses Peanut Butter Pie
08. Enchiladas
07. Banana Cream Pie
06. Breakfast Burritos
05. Philly Cheese Steak Bagels
04. Calzones
03. Fried Rice
02. Chicken Alfredo (w/bacon, s. seeds, blk olives)
- #1. Fat Bastards**

What is the most inventive way to use a sanitary
napkin in prison? (Other than intended use)

12. Clean up coffee spills (saves staining towels)
11. Door duster (place along bottom of door to keep
dust/hair/mice out)
10. Crochet animal stuffing
09. Chair booties (bottom of plastic chairs to
keep them quiet)
08. To make Band-Aids
07. Shoulder pads
06. To mop with, to clean everything, but windows
05. Vent covers, to keep cold air from coming in
04. To make curlers
03. To make ear plugs
02. As eye mask, to keep light out
- #1. For boot inserts (cushions and absorbs moisture)**

Hints that you may have been in prison too looong when...

12. You feel like a baller when you have pantene, ground coffee, and your own boots
11. You use maxi pads for cleaning and shoe inserts
10. You pluck your eyebrows with a tampon string
09. You show up at the pharmacist with a cup of water for med line
08. You try to pay for everything with stamps
07. You use sharpies and craft supplies for makeup
06. You find yourself standing by your bed a few times a day for count
05. You remember when CO's had hair
04. You use toothpaste as glue
03. You wear shower shoes in your own shower
02. You put iron creases into your sweatpants
- #1. You go to McDonald's and steal the spork, ketchup, and napkins!! :)

Slang, verbiage, and phrases, most commonly used in prison...

12. Kill your number
11. On the outs/streets
10. Puttin' a 10 on a 2
09. Window talking
08. What had happened was
07. Miss me with that shit
06. On the installment plan
05. Trust and Believe
04. A new number
03. Takes a skittle pack
02. That's that shit
- #1. Gay for the Stay



Two trombonists playing on plaza in front of Central Library, by Anthony Geathers; Anthony Geathers photograph collection, Brooklyn Public Library, Center for Brooklyn History

A Day in the Life of an Incarcerated College Student

P. M. Dunne

After leaving a house party, at midnight, I head to the beach with my friends & a couple of girls. The air is still as water creeps past our ankles. Sand bugs feast on our flesh. We find newspaper & driftwood under the boardwalk. We pop xannies & drink Yuenglings & pass a bowl around, flames flickering in our eyes. I make out with one of the girls, a preppy redhead, then follow her toward the tide, until heat drifts from our skin & jellyfish quiver beside us. The ground & the ocean & the sky rattle like a cage.

I awake to a baton banging against the bars. Morning count, the C.O. growls, lights on.

To prepare for school, I listen to ambient music with my eyes closed. I stretch. I do pranayama as people dart past my cell. I concentrate on my breath, following the air as it enters one nostril & leaves the other. Nobody seems to notice or care, which is fine by me. I've learned to cherish solitude. There's something beautiful, perfect even, about letting go, just letting go of everything, even if it's only for a few minutes; but there's also something beautiful, perfect even, about searching, just searching for whatever's lost in those moments. At least I think so.

On our way to the mess hall a prisoner staggers, catches himself, staggers again, does a weird little dance, flailing his arms as if he's swimming or flying, then groans before crumbling into a heap on the floor. No one tries to help him. His buddies amble away.

Walkie-talkies crackle to life, fracturing the silence. The officers tell us to turn around, to keep our hands up, our foreheads pressed against the wall. Paint chips flake on my shoes, a light dusting of time: the '70s were pea soup green; the '80s were navy blue; the '90s, seal gray; and the aughts, beige. These days the walls are white. White, white, white. In a few decades, they'll probably be padded...

Crazy Kip holds a banana at eye-level & asks everyone at the table what they see. Look closely, he says, providing sound effects. Eeeeeee! Eee-eeee! Guys ignore him, grimacing at their trays or theorizing about the guy who fell out in the hallway.

I finish my coffee & venture a guess. Phone? Pistol? Random phallic object?

Nope, he laughs. It's a yellow dolphin.

A gang of officers stops me near the school building & makes me walk through the metal detector. First step in, the things turn red, whines. Just like them. It needs to be recalibrated. They act as if they're shocked by this unforeseeable situation. The female officer pat frisks me. 'Vigorously,' you might say. I smile. I haven't smoked a cigarette in years, but-

Scooter & Greg think it was marijuana, K2, or marijuana laced with bath salts, Nico, Black, & Freddy think it was suboxone, chinita, or bad dope, & Igor thinks it was diabetes, high-blood pressure, or encephalitis. Perhaps a mixture of all three. They engage in a heated debate over the negative side effects of drugs.

According to them, bath salts turn people into cannibals. White scientists created bath salts to destroy the black community, & the prison administration is in cahoots with the scientists. I interrupt to tell them that most bath salts users are white. A frenzy ensues.

Bath salt abuse is a public health crisis in white & black neighborhoods, Nico announces suddenly, randomly, without looking at anyone, as if in preparation of a speech. Social studies majors. They love giving speeches. They consider themselves 'solution-oriented' individuals. They're going to 'revitalize' their communities when they go home. (I just want to be human.) They ask JB, my fellow lit major, to weigh in on the dilemma, but he doesn't care to participate. He always looks drunk or high. Or both. Unlike them, however, he has good taste in literature.

Of course they know better than to ask for my opinion, that I'm not a gossip/drama king, that if it isn't about art or reentry, then it isn't for me, so instead they ask a transfer student, who just arrived here from another prison, an old timer majoring in math, to offer his wisdom. Math Guy clears his throat. With the exception of some rustling papers & a dropped pen, the room is quiet. He looks at me for help. I give him the 'don't do it' face. He admits knowing little to nothing about bath salts, that he's really from the angel dust era, but suggests that everyone simply wait for the truth to come out on its own, rather than speculate & unwittingly perpetuate rumors, most of which are probably complete fabrications or incomplete truths at best, because that's how shit starts in the first place, right? Plus, it's always better to mind your own business anyway. Math Jedi.

Scooter, Nico, Black, & Freddy scrunch up their faces. Igor turns to Greg. Math dudes, lit dudes, they're all the same. They only think about themselves.

You know that feeling when you come to despise something you once enjoyed, like a favorite song you've since grown tired of?

I get that at least once a day. I also get its opposite.

Is there a difference between an optimistic pessimist & a pessimistic optimist?

I'm a first-generation Deadpool fan. I read the graphic novels way before Ryan Reynolds donned red & black for the films. I hate Spiderman, consider him a fugazi Pool. I believe the Uncanny X-Force is nothing without Wade Wilson, & I think Shiklah is the most beautiful succubus in the world. In other words, I'm a real fan. I first encountered the Merc with the Mouth in the mid-'90s, at a flea market with my grandmother, back when society was less tolerant of juvenile delinquency & kids like us were guinea pigs for Big Pharma—whose secret mission, as everybody knows, is to eradicate the mutant X-gene from the human population...

If you don't know who Deadpool is, then I suggest you put. The. Damn. Pipe. Down. Ask Siri or something, jeez.

I think I relate to Wade because, much like him, I am a reluctant philosopher who appreciates a good punch line (not to be confused with a good fisting). I'm not sure if that counts as a double entendre. Anyway, when I get out of here, I plan to establish a PoolCon, a more debauched version of SantaCon, an excuse for Deadpool fans to get drunk in public on Halloween (not that they

need one). There will be prizes for the best costumes, worst costumes, most drunkest, etc. Domino, Gwenpool, Dogpool, Catpool, Carpool, Cesspool, et al. will be embraced. Bob, Weasel, Punisher, Howard the Duck, & Squirrel Girl will be tolerated. Spiderman fans - assuming Aunt May allows them out past curfew - will be pantsed on YouTube Live. Affiliated bars will say, No mask, no katana, no service. They will serve nothing but alcohol & chimichangas. Upon waking up the next morning, people will wish they had Wade's healing factor. PoolCon will most likely be banned by the President.

I'm pretty sure 'DeadCon' is already taken; it's too cool not to be. 'PoolCon' kind of sounds like a lifeguard convention or something, but it's the only option that's catchy & also makes sense. Don't judge me. The art history professor is a kvetcher & a curmudgeon who often brags about a now two-deacades-old, year-long stint at MoMA. He demands the undivided attention of everyone - including the auditors. He stops halfway through his spiel to ask me a question about Pollock. I look out the window & sigh, the posture of a misunderstood genius. I walk to the chalkboard. I close my eyes. I draw a mess of squiggly lines with different colored chalk. I press my palm in the middle of it & leave a print. I bow. The class offers a golfer's clap. Okay, he says, eyes narrowed. You can have a seat now.

Somebody stomps a cockroach in the bathroom. Smears guts across the floor. I watch its legs twitch. Then stop. I sigh.

When I was a child I killed indiscriminately - plants, insects, small animals. As an adult, however, I can't imagine killing anything, especially a species meant to outlive me.

After lunch I get attacked by the same mob from before. They don't seem to recognize me. I take my chain, my belt, my boots off to go through the metal detector. It rings again. A fat officer, a male this time, pat frisks me. He wheezes when it's over. No shanks. No drugs. No contraband. Maybe the machine's too sensitive, one of the rookies says. The senior officers grumble. I salute them & then laugh.

Most people don't know that I have great time management skills...

Instead of working on my metaphysics essay (the one due in three days), I write a metaphysical poem - or, rather, a poem about metaphysics.

Writing a metaphysical poem would require telekinesis, I think.

I wonder if the professor will accept my doggerel in place of an essay. She seems cool. I'll tell her it's a new transcendental form of metacognition, a pure distillation of Kant's sublime. Interesting, she'll say, followed by an awkward silence.

It's been a month since the wind caressed my naked face. I go to the yard. Pale & sickly, I feel out of place. I do some laps, then find an empty spot on the bleachers. I inhale deeply.

An army of ants marches by, surrounds an apple core, dissects it before carrying it off to their colony on the other side of the wall. I peruse an obscure literary journal, underlining in pencil all the things that resonate with me, feeling inspired. A poem is a gateless gate, I write in the margin. Sunlight washes over me. The clouds look like rumpled bed sheets. My spirit's up there, somewhere, rolling around with Calliope.

Someone from the block, a guy I'm currently preparing for the college entry essay, tells me I'm 'weird' because I'm reading outside instead of working out or using the phone. Though it isn't intended as such, I take it as a compliment: after all, I don't want to be 'normal' in here. I don't want to 'fit in.' That would be weird.

I help Old Man Bennett up the stairs. He's partially blind, mostly deaf. Killed his wife & her lover after catching them mid-tryst. Thank you, young man, he says, at least five decibels above a normal tone. He just called me 'young man,' I say to the guy walking beside me, grinning like an idiot.

The counselor calls me for a quarterly. He's seeing another prisoner when I get there, though, so I have to wait in the bullpen. Full house. I recognize one of the guys in there: my victim's son. He looks up from a tattered issue of *Time*, sucks his teeth. The other guys smell tension in the air & wait. Part of me wants to have a man-to-man, to apologize for everything, & another part of me wants to gouge his eyes out. Upon arriving here, about a year ago, he put a few cartons of cigarettes on my head, but nobody took the job. Out of respect for me, a mutual acquaintance told me

what was going on. Now he knows that I know. It's complicated. I understand his anger - really, I do - but as they say: I. Am. Not. The. One.

Although we do our best to avoid each other, our paths cross every once in a while. Prison is a very small place. I sit across from him, occasionally glancing at the secondhand, thinking, *the universe is really fucking with me today*. No eye contact. Twenty-seven minutes & fifty-six seconds later, he leaves to meet with his counselor. I loosen my grip on the pen in my pocket. I remember to exhale.

Self-righteous douche goes through the motions, asks the usual, stupid though mandatory questions: Do you fear for your life? Do you ever think about hurting yourself or others? Do you have anything to look forward to when you get out? I answer No, no, & yes, though I really feel like answering Yes, yes, & maybe. I tell him that I'm busy with finals, that I'm asserting, in my paper, that art is a form of meditation that simulates the divine activity of Aristotle's primary god. He nods, hands me a printout of my case plan, suggests I go to church or AA/NA meetings. I tell him Jesus has enough to deal with already, &, in my line of work, quitters never prosper.

Our promise is greater than our poverty.

I remind myself of this every day.

I have to.

Rumor #12 about the guys who fell out earlier: He owes money for a debt that's followed him from another spot, so he pulled a 'medical stunt' to buy himself some time.

Fact #1: Time is immaterial. You can't buy it.

Fact #2: The infirmary isn't protected by a force field.

This evening, the spaghetti is overdone, soggy, & cold. No amount of parmesan can rescue it. No amount of seasoning can resurrect it. No amount of mouthwash can erase its memory. This was supposed to be the highlight of my day, not the major blooper. What's the opposite of a Michelin star? Whatever it is, that's what the mess hall deserves.

It's a non-shower night & everyone stinks. Yay. We trudge back to the block & fill our buckets with hot water. The water looks like iced tea. After so many years, this shit is probably going to activate our X-genes. Or give us brain damage. Fuck it. *If they don't care about Flint*, I think, *they definitely don't care about us*.

"If They Don't Care About Flint, They Definitely Don't Care About Us" - title of a new prose poem? I'm too tired to go to evening programs; I plan to wash up, make ramen, think about how I'm going to merge Kant & Aristotle, then let my headphones lull me into sweet oblivion. On the way to my cell GT hands me a bowl of curry chicken & rice, a healthy slice of jailhouse cheesecake. If I weren't so damn hungry, I'd probably cry.

I don't have any friends. I've got family & frenemies.

Why can't everyone be more like Kip?

Hopefully, things will be different in the free world.

As I change into sweats & sit down to eat my meal, the company officer tells me I've got to go to the law library for certified mail. I figure it's the Moshfegh novel I ordered weeks ago from Amazon. Something to break up the monotony, you know? I'm excited.

I trek across the prison only to discover that the mailroom's mixed me up with someone from another block with a similar-sounding last name. By the time I return to my cell the food is cold - still good, of course, though not as good as it could be. Such is life.

Master the Art of Gratitude before you die, I write in my journal before turning off my lamp & cocooning myself in blankets. You're one day closer to freedom.

Wrestling With Dad

by Chad Rand

My father used to throw us,
me, my brother, my sister, around
our living room carpet. His only

play, really. I don't remember
other childhood games with him.
He loved us in subtler ways.

But the wrestling I recall
with ease, how he'd lift us up,
more than one at a time, into

the air and tumble us down,
or soar us on the soles of his
stocking feet like we were weather

vanes and he the sturdy barn below.
I remember his arms, gentle and
strong, how we couldn't escape

though we wanted to but didn't
mind being trapped in his
aggressive embrace. Years later,

I wrestled with other men
in different ways, seeking more
complicated pleasures, specific pains.

My father wrestled with that too.
For a long time he wouldn't
mention what I was, or if

he did, it would come out in
uncomfortable jokes, good in-
tentions that made me feel wrong.

Recently he told me a story
about his christian support group.
The men had got to talking about

queers and how they shouldn't be
allowed as part of the church
since they're abominations in the

eyes of God, beyond salvation.
My father, never one to stir
the pot, began to challenge their

hard-headed notions before informing
them that I, his son, for whom these
men had lifted their prayers, was gay.

The group was stony silent as
my father quoted scriptures on
the ever-love of Christ for all

and how no one, not the whores
or murderers or anyone, was
beyond the saving grace of the Lord.

"I don't think what I said really
hit home," my father told me, but his
eyes were wild with fire. This man

who never flaunted pride stood
taller than he ever had before
sticking up for a son who had once

caused him shame. His smile collapsed
me to boyhood, and in a whole new way
my dad had pinned me to the carpet again.

A Harsh Reality

by Antonio Lancaster AKA Black Messiah

I pull my jacket tight against the gentle wind. Preparing myself for what has become a harsh reality for black men: A simple walk down the street. Our inner-city blues reads like bad news in the Metro section; orbits of deaths and farewells has us burning candles for LaQuan; praying that justice prevails. I stroll at an anxious pace wondering what form of hate produces sixteen shots? What form of justice is 81 months when a life has been snatched? I keep my head on a swivel knowing at some point the cops will notice me; flashing their light in my face. Asking if I knew why they stopped me, as if I could read Minds. Could it be that I'm young, black, or simply the fact that this hoodie conceals these dreads of mine? My mind floods with images of Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Walter Scott and Tamir Rice, as the cop car pulls up and flashes its lights.

S.O.S.

by K. Robert Schaeffer

for the men of the MDC, Brooklyn
without heat 1/27-2/3/2019

Dr-dr-dreamt I was under ice again,
my numbed blue fingers clawing at upended world.
This cold, it makes me think in monologues,
creeps down under blankets,
towels, every stitch I own-
matted sweats, septuple tees,
these elbow-worn and tattered thermals,
forget-how-many (ten and a half?) pairs of socks,
b-b-burrows to my very bones.
Weeks on, I know it, they'll crack our icy crypts,
shuffle through Bureau bigwigs, a few senators in
from D.C.
take us all in huddled here on our metal bunks
with our half-played hands of solitaire,
crumpled brittle love notes, death notes,
our frostbit, snot-circle noses,
our mug-shot glares forever frozen,
a-twinkle with coming-thaw conviction,
prompting encouraged nods,
clipboard scribbles, pats of back,
a now-I-get-it glow from the new intern
(her uncle some slimy, combed-over somebody),
who'll shatter our sepulchral gloom:
'My, oh my-how discipline makes docile bodies!'

Crowds outside, obscured by whiteout.
 Their posterboard banners, witty slogans,
 riled chants—stop.
 Sun's down, block's dead.
 Pounds on waterfront window
 slivers—stop.
 Don't they get it, that a shout-out
 on the CNN crawler won't warm these toes?
 That even w-w-with once-upon lukewarm meals,
 that long-ago, longed-for growl of electric heat,
 even on those scorching city-summer days,
 when I could see through the slit
 of my A.C.'d cell the radiating street heat— There
 was always a coldness to this place.
 It's in the walls.
 Mixed in the foundation.
 It's in the fine print of every federal contract,
 every BOP application,
 every court docket.
 It's that all-seasons bite of lost causes. Stop...

Th-th-think hoboes around a barrelfire;
 Think a thousand push-ups, sweat rolling off my
 face;
 Think scrambling up Saharan dunes, desert swelter,
 sirocco sting;
 Think Jersey hordes down the shore, bronzing,
 blistering, hairy backs all oil-slathered,
 glisten-gleaming, red and peeling;
 Think some mutt locked in a car, mid-July, tongue
 panting, forgotten;
 Think razed and smoldering California wilds,
 charred timbers, ashen heaps of
 mansions, apocalyptic plumes on the horizon;
 Think Savonarola, Bruno, La Pucelle;
 Think foreboding subsurface build-up, yawning
 fissures, fumaroles,

Think Kilauea, think Eyjafjallajökull, think Hell
 itself;
 I m-m-must be dreaming, this specter's face at
 my door,
 pane fogged by the steaming oracular vapors of
 his coffee mug,
 wool-capped, puffy-coated, double-gloved,
 that shit-grinning, gravelly wheeze scraped like
 flint
 through the cracks to my cell:
 'Steel up,' he says, my cold-blooded keeper,
 'Staten Island Chuck saw an early spring!'
 From unkind kindling, a spark,
 breakneck spread,
 a little oxygen, bloodrush, the stoking bellow— He
 heats me with rage.



Sunset over Saint Barbara's Catholic Church at 138 Bleecker Street, Brooklyn. Our Streets, Our Stories collection, Brooklyn Public Library, Center for Brooklyn History

Health & Wellness

Breathing Exercises

Breathing is something we do every day and 99.9% of the time we aren't aware of it. So, you may be asking yourself, why would I need to learn breathing techniques?

Let's start with the basics: breathing is the inhalation of oxygen and the exhalation of carbon dioxide, and we breathe anywhere from 12 to 20 times per minute. Beyond keeping us alive, there is extensive research showing that when we focus and control our breathing, it can have positive effects on our physical and mental health.

This is because the systems of our body that facilitate the process of breathing are closely tied to our nervous system which, among other things, processes and regulates our emotions.

Since breathing and our emotions can influence one another, when someone starts to feel panicky or nervous, for instance, their breathing can become short, almost like a pant. When a person becomes angry or frustrated, their breath can become heavy, and might be almost entirely mostly through the nose.

Using the techniques below can help to focus the breath, which in turn can help with regulating emotions like anxiety, frustration, or anger, as well as manage stress, act as a sleep aid, and support you during strenuous activities. With practice, these techniques can help you keep a cool head in stressful and even dangerous situations.

Below are several different techniques - try one technique for at least a week before moving on to another. Different exercises will work differently for each person, and the more regularly they are practiced, the more effective they will become.

For all techniques:

All exercises are best done from a comfortable position with your back straight, neck and shoulders relaxed. Make sure to breathe out fully before beginning exercises, and to take a moment at the beginning and end of the practice to notice how your body feels and whether anything has changed.

To begin with, repeat sets when you are already calm, starting with 2-3 sets each time you practice. You can do this several times a day, and then decide if you want to increase. Experiment with the practice at different times of day to see how it affects you.

Technique 1: Box Breathing

During this exercise, imagine a square, with each step passing on to the next corner, and the exercise ending at the first corner again.

1. Breathe in through your nose for a count of four, filling the lungs.
2. Hold your breath in the lungs for a count of four.
3. Breathe out slowly through your mouth for a count of four, emptying the lungs fully.
4. Wait for a count of four before breathing in again.

Technique 2: Alternate Nostril Breathing

1. Close your right nostril with the thumb of one hand.
2. Breathe in fully through your left nostril.
3. Close your left nostril with your fourth finger and release your thumb.
4. Breathe out through your right nostril.
5. Breathe in through your right nostril.
6. Close your right nostril with the thumb and release the fourth finger.
7. Breathe out through your left nostril.

Finish your session with an exhale on the left side.

Technique 3: Lion's Breath

1. Press your palms against your knees with your fingers spread wide.
2. Inhale deeply through your nose and open your eyes wide.
3. At the same time, open your mouth as wide as you can and stick out your tongue.
4. Contract the muscles at the front of your throat as you exhale out through your mouth by making a long "ha" sound as you exhale, while moving eyes up toward the sky and stretching the facial muscles.

Technique 4: Four-Seven-Eight Breathing

1. Breathe deeply through your nose for a count of four.
2. Hold your breath for a count of seven.
3. Exhale loudly (like a deep sigh) through your mouth for a count of eight.

Technique 5: Pursed Lip Breathing

1. Keeping your mouth closed, inhale slowly through your nose for 2 counts.
2. Pucker or purse your lips as though you were going to whistle.
3. Exhale slowly by blowing air through your pursed lips for a count of 4.

Technique 6: Diaphragmatic Breathing

Belly breathing can help you use your diaphragm properly, which can slow the heart rate and lower blood pressure. Do belly breathing exercises when you're feeling relaxed and rested.

Practice diaphragmatic breathing for 5 to 10 minutes 3 to 4 times per day.

1. Lie on your back with your knees slightly bent and your head supported (you may place a pillow under your head and/or knees for support).
2. Place one hand on your upper chest and one hand below your rib cage, allowing you to feel the movement of your diaphragm.
3. Slowly inhale through your nose, feeling your stomach pressing into your hand.
4. Keep your other hand as still as possible.
5. Exhale using pursed lips as you tighten your stomach muscles, keeping your upper hand completely still.

You can place a book on your abdomen to make the exercise more difficult. Once you learn how to do belly breathing lying down. You can increase the difficulty by trying it while sitting in a chair. You can then practice the technique while performing your daily activities.

Health & Wellness

Health Resources

Prison Health News

Prison Health News publishes a newsletter four times a year for people in prison about health issues like COVID-19, Hepatitis-C, HIV, diabetes, asthma, depression, PTSD, exercise, nutrition, LGBTQ health and more. Write to them to ask for a free subscription:

Prison Health News
4722 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143



Correctional Health Services Update: NYC Health + Hospitals

Correctional Health Services is the direct provider of health services in NYC jails. They also provide some transitional planning and reentry health services. CHS runs the following programs:

Community Connections Service (CCS)

- » Transitional planning
- » Medicaid applications, counseling, and Naloxone training
- » To speak with CHS staff, enter your PIN, dial 777#, and give your name and book and case number; Monday-Friday, 8 am to 5 pm

Have concerns about the health care you received in the City's jails? Contact CHS Patient Relations by calling 347.774.7030 from Monday-Friday, 8 am to 4 pm

News & Current Events

A selection of news updates from New York,
Winter 2023

HALT Update

As of March 31, 2022, the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement (HALT) Act was enacted in the State of New York, which sets a 15-day limit on "segregated confinement" – any form of isolation exceeding 17 hours a day – for any person incarcerated in the State. This law also states that no person may be placed in solitary confinement for more than 20 total days in any 60-day period. Persons in solitary confinement may not be denied basic services or needs, such as medical care, access to counsel, clothing, bedding, etc.

The new law also states that certain populations are not eligible for solitary confinement for any period of time for any reason, such as: people with physical or mental disabilities, anyone 21 years or younger or 55 years or older, or individuals who are pregnant, up to eight weeks postpartum, or are caring for children in a facility.

Before the law was enacted, the State held over 1,600 persons in solitary, and the low was under 300 since the law was signed.

Any person who remains in solitary confinement must be transferred to a new unit created under the law, the Residential Rehabilitation Unit (RRU), or an alternative unit that adheres to RRU standards. These units must provide six hours of therapeutic programming and one hour of recreation per day.

The Nelson Mandela Rules, which have been adopted by the United Nations, classify more than fifteen days of segregated confinement as torture.

Student Debt Cancellation

There aren't official numbers on how many people in custody carry student debt, but it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of people in the United States entered incarceration with significant student debt.

On August 24, the Biden Administration announced a new opportunity to apply for loan forgiveness—of up to \$20,000 for Federal Pell Grant recipients and up to \$10,000 for non-Pell recipients. Individuals who made under \$125,000 in 2021 or 2020, and households who made less than \$250,000 in 2021 or 2020 are eligible.

This program is currently held up in the courts and is on pause, but if you have questions there is a hotline number: 1-833-932-3439. Wait times can be long.

While you wait, you may still apply to several programs to have your payments paused:

- » If you are incarcerated for **9 months or less**, you can apply to have your collections paused until after your anticipated parole or earliest release date.
- » If you are incarcerated **longer than 9 months but less than 10 years**, you can apply for the government to pause collections until your earliest possible release date.
- » If you are incarcerated for **10 years or more**, you can apply for the government to write off your defaulted loans (these can be reinstated).

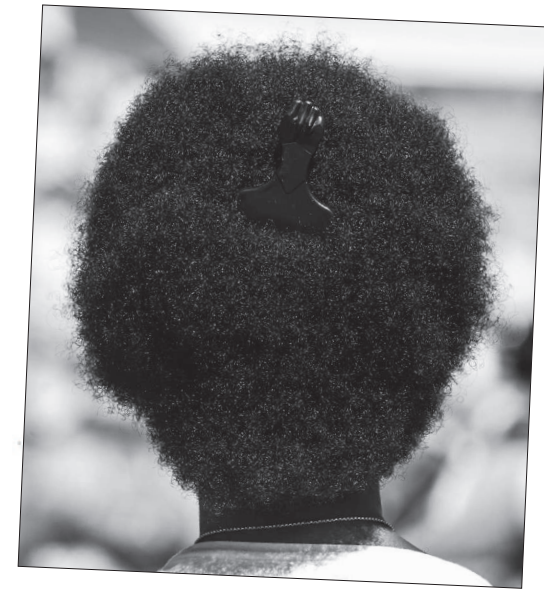
To apply, you will need to mail a letter (on official prison letterhead and signed by a prison official) with the following verifiable information:

- » Official proof of how long you are expected to be incarcerated

- » Your name
- » Your social security number
- » Date of birth
- » Inmate number
- » Release date or date of eligibility of parole, whichever is sooner
- » Name, title and phone number of the prison official verifying your information

You can mail this letter to:

U.S. Department of Education
Federal Student Aid Info Center
P.O. Box 1854
Monticello, KY 42633



Back view of person wearing hair pick in form of Black Power fist by Anthony Geathers

Anthony Geathers photograph collection,
Brooklyn Public Library,
Center for Brooklyn History

Word Search

Book Genres

L	M	E	A	D	Y	S	A	D	L	T	N	I	O
H	O	R	R	O	R	A	A	R	A	H	P	F	C
O	E	I	U	L	E	R	I	I	C	R	T	I	A
E	M	P	L	A	T	O	P	D	I	A	T	C	S
A	Y	W	P	R	S	M	O	R	R	W	C	S	C
D	T	E	O	U	Y	A	T	A	O	H	H	A	I
V	H	S	S	T	M	N	S	M	T	E	T	T	S
E	O	T	U	A	E	C	Y	A	S	L	F	H	S
N	L	E	S	N	M	E	D	V	I	A	A	R	A
T	O	R	P	R	I	A	R	U	H	A	N	I	L
U	G	N	E	E	R	H	U	M	O	R	T	L	C
R	Y	L	N	P	C	F	T	T	C	A	A	L	A
E	R	S	S	U	P	H	Y	R	E	I	S	E	A
U	Y	C	E	S	A	S	P	O	R	T	Y	R	I

- SUPERNATURAL
- CLASSICS
- WAR
- FANTASY
- ADVENTURE
- MYSTERY
- DYSTOPIA
- SUSPENSE
- HORROR
- SPORT
- SCIFI
- THRILLER
- DRAMA
- HUMOR
- WESTERN
- ROMANCE
- MYTHOLOGY
- CRIME
- HISTORICAL

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/4039492/>

a

1	2	3	4		7	8		
4				3	6			
	7	6	5					
8	6					5		
			2					
	9					7	3	
				9	4	8		
			1	7				2
		1	3		2	7	9	6

b

4	2			8				
			6					7
	3		9	5		8		
			1	6			5	4
8			3		4			9
6	4			7	9			
		2		9	5		1	
3					5			
				3			8	5

c

						4		
1	6				7		3	
		3		8	4	9		2
9			2				1	4
			3	8				
3	4			5				7
8		6	4	7		1		
	3		6				9	8
		9						

d

8							2	3
		3			5	7	1	
				4	9			
	7				9	5		2
9	2			3			8	4
5		8	1					7
				5	1			
	9	7	6				2	
1	6							8

Crossword Puzzle 1

Kate Chin Park

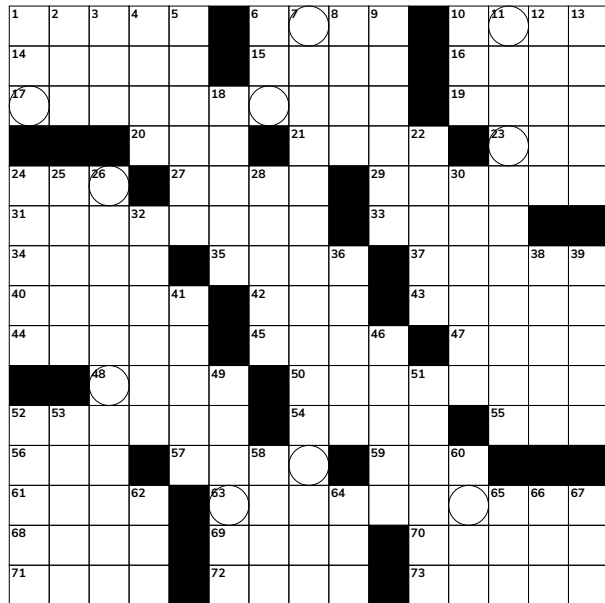
PF Thangs

ACROSS

- 1 Chills with some buds
- 6 Gemstone with a "fire" variety
- 10 Argument
- 14 Constellation with a notable "belt"
- 15 Black-and-white predator
- 16 Little bit
- 17 Stronghold constructed on a bed, maybe
- 19 Practice throwing punches
- 20 Not against
- 21 [Your microwave dinner is ready]
- 23 To and ___
- 24 Motor oil brand known for NASCAR sponsorships
- 27 Convert's enthusiasm
- 29 Words of acceptance
- 31 "Gimme a break!"
- 33 Academic year subdivision
- 34 ___ gobi (South Asian cauliflower-and-potato dish)
- 35 Family that is the Parks' rivals, in "Parasite"
- 37 A bit damp
- 40 Catcher's supply
- 42 Pet that may appear disdainful
- 43 Nautical navigation tool
- 44 Ruin, as a surprise
- 45 Attempt
- 47 Venus de ___ (Greek sculpture)
- 48 One of 25 on many measuring tapes
- 50 "Not sure but ok"
- 52 Religion of Japanese origin
- 54 Hand-painted sheets in animation
- 55 Important part of a treasure hunt
- 56 Has the ability to
- 57 Bad thing to leave in?
- 59 Stat. a valedictorian can be proud of
- 61 Dr. ___ ("Austin Powers" villain)
- 63 Himalayan flyer
- 68 Yours might be aquiline or button
- 69 Roof overhang
- 70 Furious
- 71 Message bounceback?
- 72 Lidded features
- 73 One in a stack at the gym

DOWN

- 1 Make a move in ___ scotch
- 2 "God Is a Woman" singer, to fans
- 3 Zero, in soccer lingo
- 4 Scottie Scheffler's sport
- 5 Catch some Z's
- 6 "Oh, that's not good"
- 7 Loved celeb who turns out to have a history of troubling remarks, say
- 8 Land measurement
- 9 Most recent
- 10 Term of endearment used among Black women
- 11 Mass-produced "girlboss" merchandise, e.g.
- 12 Developer of the classic games "Breakout" and "Centipede"
- 13 Forward-looking reading material?
- 18 With 53-Down, cause chaos
- 22 Verses by Warsan Shire or Joshua Jennifer Espinoza
- 24 Sends unwanted email
- 25 Floral-inspired skirt silhouette
- 26 Result that can't be judged by the naked eye
- 28 Nike rival
- 30 Sweepers
- 32 Certain hotel amenity
- 36 Play place
- 38 Pico de gallo, e.g.
- 39 Boy Scouts unit
- 41 Slow creature
- 46 Bump
- 49 Baldness concealer
- 51 Spirit of France?
- 52 Part of an act
- 53 See 18-Down
- 58 Unravel
- 60 Natural hairstyle
- 62 Nickname that eliminates "nardo"
- 64 "Agreed!"
- 65 "You got into Harvard ___?" "What, like it's hard?" ("Legally Blonde" quote)
- 66 Was fed
- 67 Pomade alternative



Crossword Puzzle 2

Kate Chin Park

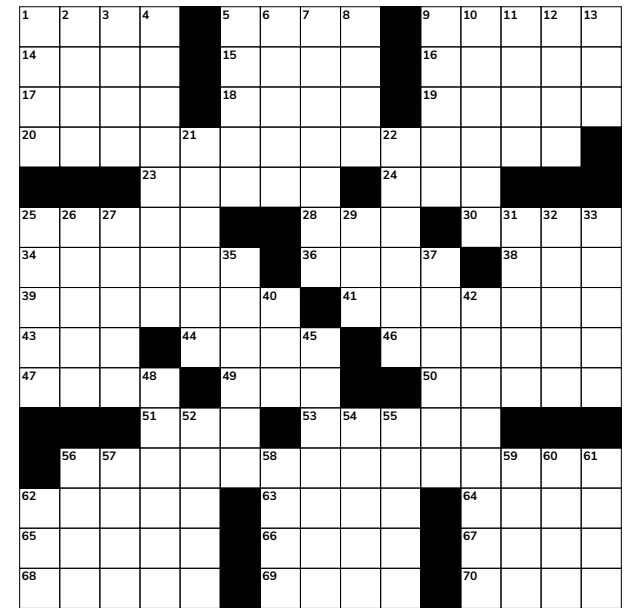
In a Manner of Speaking

ACROSS

- 1 Outcome whose odds are increased by predatory car loans
- 5 "Chico ___" (Spanish version of Billie Eilish's "Bad Guy")
- 9 Gradually transform
- 14 Pie hole?
- 15 Many
- 16 Old timey town pronouncement maker
- 17 Alphabetize, maybe
- 18 Possible result of 17-Across
- 19 Word repeated in the sign "___! ___! ___! Just kidding, we only have wings"
- 20 "Smdh," in other words
- 23 Species of African antelope with the same letters as "laden"
- 24 Coop carer
- 25 Speak Spanish?
- 28 Prefix meaning "relating to eggs"
- 30 Useful Thanksgiving dinner skill, sometimes
- 34 Seat of New York government
- 36 "Alonzo Mourning nodding" and "Sha'q cat," for two
- 38 John who played Harold in the "Harold and Kumar" movies
- 39 "It me," in other words
- 41 "My column!," in other words
- 43 Hosp. area for acutely ill patients
- 44 Diana who swam from Cuba to Florida at age 64 (and whose last name sounds, aptly, like "naiad")
- 46 ___ Nevada (beer brand or mountain range)
- 47 Rainy-day wedding need
- 49 Nail polish brand with shades like "Can't Be Beet!" and "Withstands the Test of Thyme"
- 50 "Miss Jackson if you're ___"
- 51 Now-defunct msg. app where one might post emo song lyrics in an Away Message
- 53 Worst possible things to find in roach inspections
- 56 "Tfw you were extremely wrong," in other words
- 62 Handheld South American snack often filled with queso
- 63 Who said, "Grand Master of Jedi Order am I. Won this job in a raffle I did, think you?"
- 64 First field on a form, often
- 65 Country ruled for nearly 1000 years by the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties
- 66 Naturalist known as the "father of the national parks"
- 67 MLB's Longoria or NBA's Turner
- 68 Like measurements of volume
- 69 Components of many business addresses (abbr.)
- 70 "i___ mio!"

DOWN

- 1 Like the future, hopefully
- 2 Fat commonly used in cooking, for short
- 3 Home of Machu Picchu
- 4 In hiding, in a way
- 5 Country in the middle of the Mediterranean
- 6 Sci-fi horror that introduced Ellen Ripley in 1979
- 7 Heading on a homemade sign
- 8 von Bismarck who was president of Prussia
- 9 "Me and Bobby ___" (song by Janis Joplin)
- 10 What to do to oneself when exiting a subway station, perhaps
- 11 Nickname for Rihanna
- 12 Throw (at), as snowballs
- 13 Timesheet units, for short
- 21 Support org. for families of addicts
- 22 Some dresses
- 25 "Sister Act 2: Back in the ___"
- 26 Wonderland explorer
- 27 What's "all fun and games until someone loses an eye," in "A Christmas Story"
- 29 By way of
- 31 Some Windows-running laptops
- 32 The Billboard Hot 100, for example
- 33 There's no day like it, they say
- 35 Safe to say he's America's only superstar cellist
- 37 Largest religion in Japan, by number of adherents
- 40 Greet, in a way
- 42 Deduced or inferred
- 45 Go to a restaurant
- 48 Capital of Taiwan
- 52 Lee ___ Chung, writer and director of "Minari"
- 54 English transgender comic and activist Izzard
- 55 Shadowboxes, possibly
- 56 Drop ___ (undress)
- 57 Thyme, mint, or dill
- 58 Facilities with mats and machines
- 59 Sitar player ___ Shankar
- 60 "omg hilarious"
- 61 Cravings
- 62 Org. behind the Westminster Dog Show



Share Your Experiences

New York City jails and state prisons have independent oversight organizations that you can contact directly to report on the conditions of your incarceration.

For New York State Prisons:

The Correctional Association of New York is the only independent organization in New York with authority under state law to *monitor prisons* and report findings to the legislature and the broader public.

In addition to onsite prison monitoring visits, CANY confidentially communicates with incarcerated people about their experiences through the mail, one-on-one interviews, and collect phone calls.

Call:
CANY at 212.254.5700

Write to:
Correctional Association of New York
P.O. Box 793
Brooklyn, NY 11207

For New York City Jails:

The Board of Correction carries out independent oversight and enacts regulations to support safer, fairer, smaller, and more humane NYC jails.

The Board works to

- Ensure compliance with minimum standards "for the care, custody, correction, treatment, supervision, and discipline of all persons held or confined under the jurisdiction of the Department of Correction"
- Investigate any matter within the jurisdiction of the Department
- Review grievances from inmates and staff
- Evaluate the performance of the NYC Department of Correction (DOC)
- Make recommendations on areas of key correctional planning.

Call:
the Board of Correction at 212.669.7900

Write to:
NYC Board of Correction
2 Lafayette
Room 1221
New York, NY 10007

Sunset Park: Blizzard of 1947
by Vincent L. Stibler

Brooklyn Daily Eagle photographs,
Brooklyn Public Library,
Center for Brooklyn History



Resources

Books by Mail Programs

These organizations send books to folks who are incarcerated. Whether you're reading to learn or for fun (or both!), you can send them a letter with your contact information and your book requests. If they cannot find the particular title you're looking for, they will do their best to send an alternate.

Books Through Bars | New York City, NY

NYC Books Through Bars
c/o Bluestockings Bookstore
116 Suffolk Street
New York, NY 10002

Books Thru Bars | Ithaca College, NY

IC Books Thru Bars
P.O. Box 113
Brooktondale, NY 14817

Email: booksthru bars@gmail.com

Beacon Prison Books Project | Beacon, NY Books

Beacon Prison Books Project
P.O. Box 132
Beacon, NY 12508

Email: info@prisonbooksproject.org

Correspondence Programs

These groups provide pen pal programs, fulfill reference and information requests, and provide resources relevant to incarcerated people. Please use their mailing addresses below to receive more information!

Critical Resistance

Critical Resistance is an organization founded with the goal of providing political education, prisoner solidarity, and resisting policing and imprisonment. They publish a bilingual (English/Spanish) newsletter, *The Abolitionist*, which is sent for free three times a year to incarcerated persons with a subscription.

They also host a prisoner correspondence program (not a pen pal program), through which volunteers can connect you to different political, legal, health, and study resources. If you are interested in subscribing to *The Abolitionist* or engaging in the correspondence program, please send a letter to:

Critical Resistance New York City
P.O. Box 2282
New York, NY 10163

Black & Pink

Black & Pink is a nonprofit organization founded in 2005, dedicated to providing community and support for LGBTQIA2S+, as well as HIV/AIDS-positive persons behind bars. The national organization provides a free monthly newsletter with over 19,000 subscribers, containing news, history, and writings from the community.

They have a chapter based out of New York City, which specializes in pen pal matching, re-entry support, sending solidarity packages and commissary to people on the inside. If you are interested in getting in touch to either receive their newsletter, or to be matched with a Pen Pal, please write a letter to:

Black & Pink NYC
P.O. Box 1741
New York, NY 10013

Please note that updating their mailing lists can take 6-12 months, due to the complications of communication through prisons, so please consider this before signing up if you feel it may endanger you or cause inconvenience.

Crossword 2

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Contact Us

As library workers, we believe that access to information is your right! Have questions about something? It can be about almost anything: recipes, sports, history, nature—whatever comes to mind. Send us a letter and we'll find the answer.*

Write to us at:

Justice Initiatives
Outreach Services
Brooklyn Public Library
10 Grand Army Plaza
Brooklyn, NY 11238

NOTE: At this time, we can only answer letters and questions from individuals in New York State. We cannot answer questions about someone's personal address or information.