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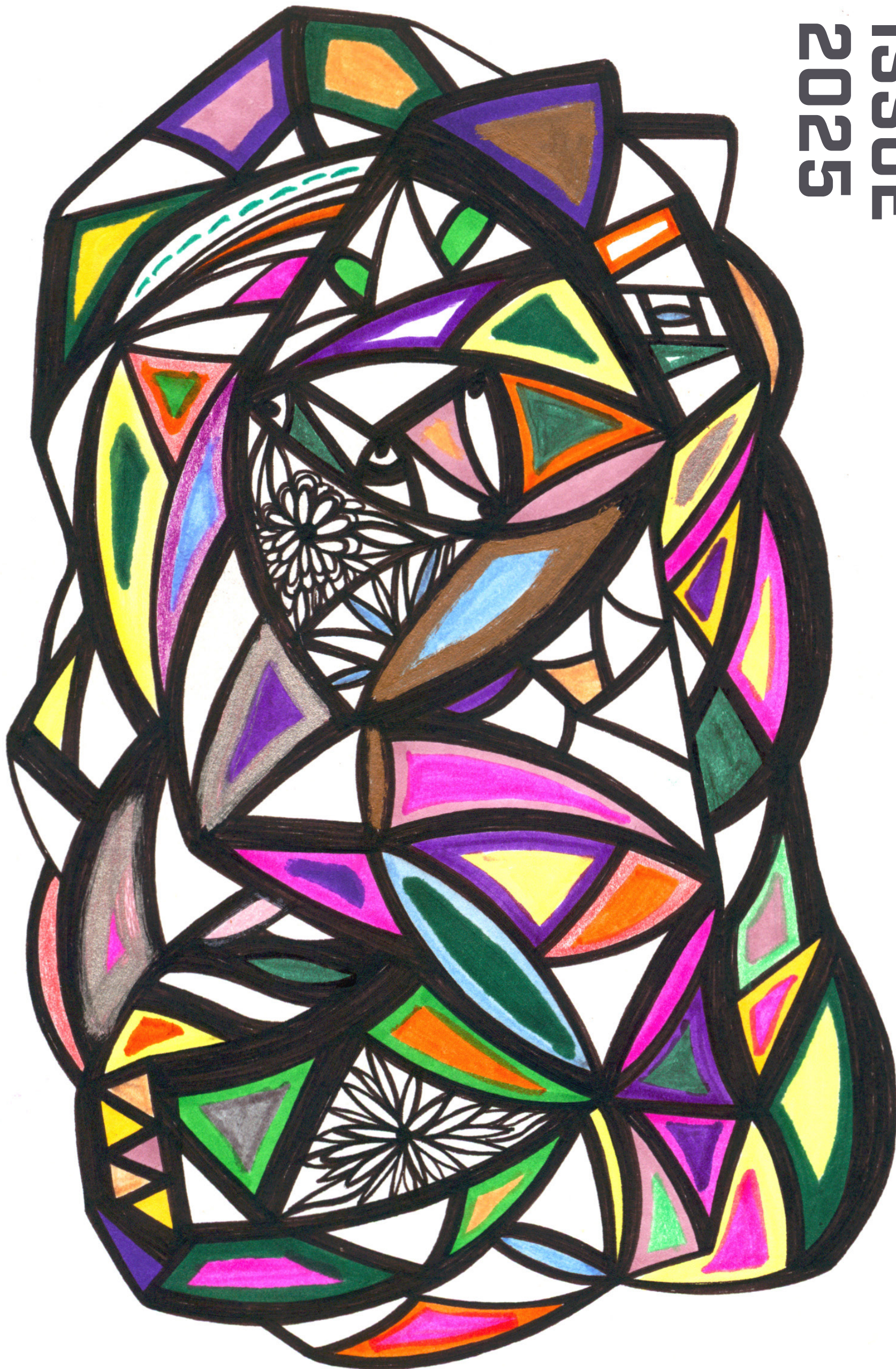
STREET SHEET IS READER SUPPORTED, ADVERTISING FREE, AND AIMS TO LIFT UP THE VOICES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY IN SAN FRANCISCO.

STREET SHEET



CURRENTLY ALSO DISTRIBUTED BY HOMEWARD STREET JOURNAL VENDORS IN SACRAMENTO

POETRY ISSUE 2025



SAN FRANCISCO

SHERRIE MARSH

When you first get here and look around
 This really seems to be the town
 You've looked so long and hard to fins
 Where the faces are so good and kind
 Where people smile and take you in
 Not caring what or where you been
 Where friends are true and always there
 And being alone is very rare
 But look again, look hard and long
 I think you'll find, there's something wrong
 The people there, they aren't real
 They eat and breathe, but they don't feel
 They'll be your friends while they need
 They're so nice that you ignore their greed
 Then come the day your money's spent
 You wonder where your good friends went
 They'll drag you down and wring you dry
 Then turn their backs while you die
 The ones you love will hurt you worst
 If you need a drink they'll let you thirst
 They'll screw your man and take your wife
 And make sure you want to take your life
 But you get smart and think you're tough
 You could take it but you've had enough
 So pack your bags, you're gonna leave
 But you stop and think and then you grieve
 For somewhere in this viper's nest
 There's something special, unlike the rest
 Whose honesty is tried and true
 Who really is a friend to you
 So you settle back, with a long sad sigh
 'Cuz you're stuck here in hell until you die



IMAGE COURTESY OF FRIENDTOTHEHOMELESS.ORG

TRY TO SLEEP NOW

JACOB FOLGER

Thanksgiving Day toasty warm
 Kitchen bustle
 Oh Sweet smells
 Familiar voices
 By the fireside
 Sitting in my car
 Tired and cold
 A chili dog only shared with my pup
 Try to sleep now
 To forget the Homelessness
 Try to sleep.

HELP KEEP STREET SHEET IN PRINT!



SCAN ME

coalition.networkforgood.com

COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agendas to us.

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

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VOLUNTEER WITH US!

- PHOTOGRAPHERS
- VIDEOGRAPHERS
- TRANSLATORS
- COMIC ARTISTS
- NEWSPAPER LAYOUT
- WEBSITE
- MAINTENANCE
- GRAPHIC DESIGNERS
- INTERNS
- WRITERS
- COPYEDITORS

DONATE EQUIPMENT!

- LAPTOPS
- DIGITAL CAMERAS
- AUDIO RECORDERS
- SOUND EQUIPMENT

CONTACT:

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Street Sheet is published and distributed on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We recognize and honor the ongoing presence and stewardship of the original people of this land. We recognize that homelessness can not truly be ended until this land is returned to its original stewards.

ORGANIZE WITH US

HOUSING JUSTICE WORKING GROUP TUESDAYS @ NOON

The Housing Justice Workgroup is working toward a San Francisco in which every human being can have and maintain decent, habitable, safe, and secure housing. This meeting is in English and Spanish and open to everyone! Email mcarrera@cohsf.org to get involved!

HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP WEDNESDAYS @12:30

The Human Rights Workgroup has been doing some serious heavy lifting on these issues: conducting direct research, outreach to people on the streets, running multiple campaigns, developing policy, staging direct actions, capturing media attention, and so much more. All those down for the cause are welcome to join! Email lpierce@cohsf.org

EVERYONE IS INVITED TO JOIN OUR WORKING GROUP MEETINGS!

I HAD A DREAM

EASY COOL

To make it come true
 When I wake up
 To feel good
 It was matter of time
 When I made her be mine
 To live and give all of her love to me
 To make me happy for the day
 To stop to say
 That I wanted to love you
 In my dream
 But now I'm here
 To have you near
 Me say to you
 That I really love you
 Can you love me too
 And let's go back to bed
 So I don't beg you
 To love me in my dreams
 That's why I want to be with you
 So that you could accept me
 Every time we're there
 Anywhere to make my dreams come true

SAFE GROUND

CATHLEEN WILLIAMS

The dusk feels reluctant, this evening in August
 six o'clock at the campsite sifts down like dust

and the long distance buses of the Amador line
 rumble to the cement barn that is their home.

We hear a night freight cross the steep embankment
 at the end of the street, each metal panel

each steel coupling & wheel grinding & abrading
 while the drowsy voices of homeless campers

talk about arrests & what the police are likely to do
 whether they'll break down the tents or not:

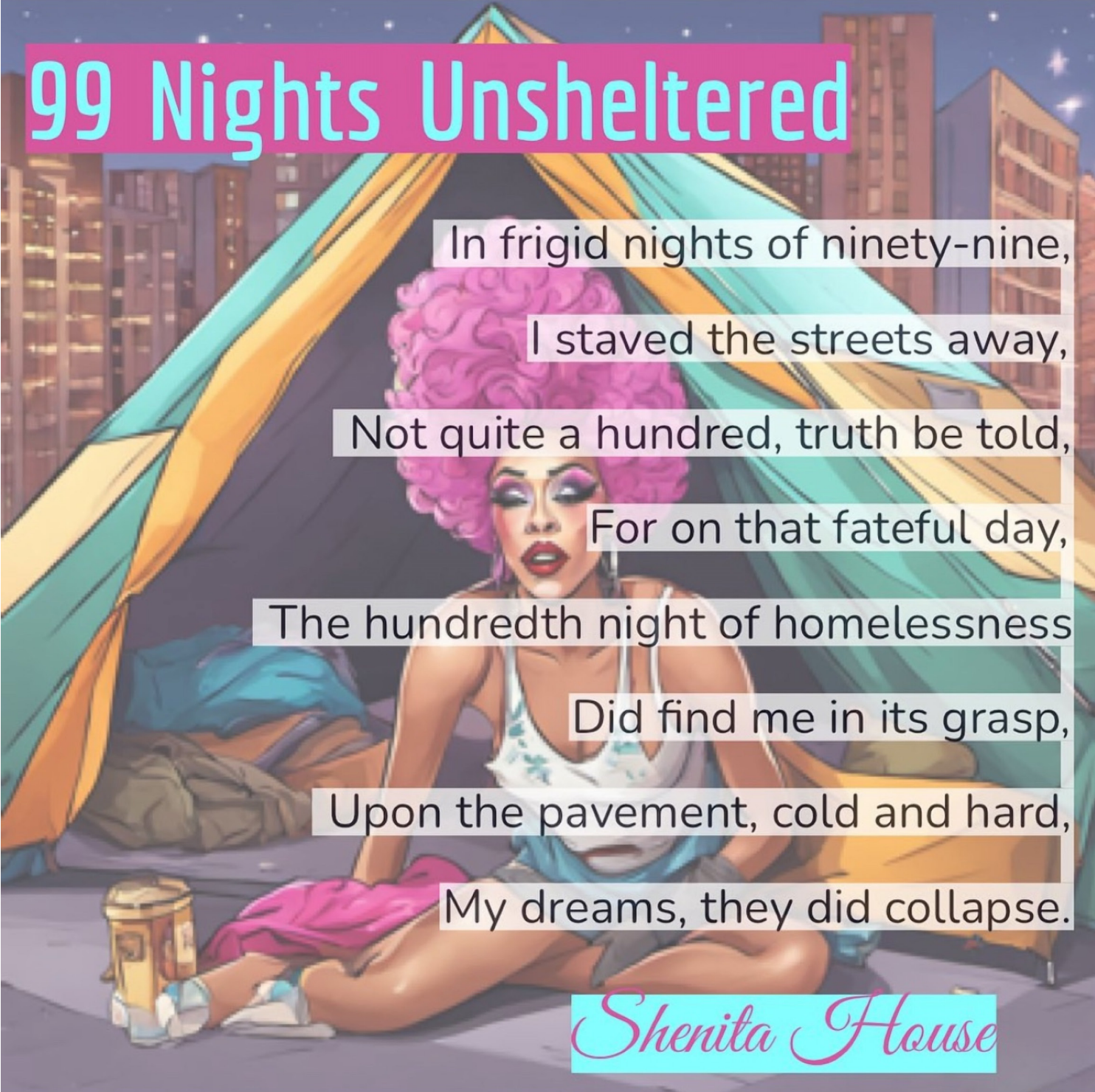
"you will be handcuffed for your own protection."
 We discuss the holding cells, the separation

relaxed in our borrowed chairs under the sumac trees
 that found this unwanted ground, fast growing

their leaves like fronds offering free shade
 to anyone below.

Before dawn they raided.
 They took everyone & all the signs of their life.

99 Nights Unsheltered



In frigid nights of ninety-nine,
 I staved the streets away,
 Not quite a hundred, truth be told,
 For on that fateful day,
 The hundredth night of homelessness
 Did find me in its grasp,
 Upon the pavement, cold and hard,
 My dreams, they did collapse.

Shenita House

young SARAH MENEFFEE

It's slavery
 Of homelessness
 He says

He chooses
 His hard dignity

One day soon
 All the homeless
 Will join forces
 And then

My lord
 I am young
 And grimed
 A mad-eyed boy's
 Brindled pitbull
 Brought onto BART

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

Pregnant & stressed
 Any help is a blessing

Help me
 & Lo Boy
 Thank u
 God bless

Hungry
 Hungry
 Hobo

DEATH BEFORE DETRANSITION

IAN MCKEE

Red and Blue know very well their silence leads to violence,
Blue said campaigning on human rights would make their main base wary
Truth is they'd abandon anyone to maintain "peaceful" silence
But our lives are worth defending, by force if necessary

If I go, I'll go swinging; won't fall for your scheme,
I won't stand silent at gravestones and weep
Because if you refuse to let us dream
We will never let you sleep

But eight weeks out from new management, there's so much to report
Like the Texas lawmaker, crying "kangaroo court"
Warrants issued for Genocide, will Netanyahu stand trial?
Don't hold your breath, the west is built on denial
And every few months I go back to the shelter memorial
And see more familiar names, engraved on rocks in dusty soil

I left years ago but somethings calling me back,
There's so many new deaths that it's hard to keep track
From sickness, exposure, or at the hands of the police,
We don't even know how many die alone on the streets.
They are me, I am them, their precious life is my own
And I'll care for them; because you won't—that much you've clearly shown

We have no seat at America's table, there's no wheel for us to steer
All you do is keep squeezing us, year after wretched year,
I'd ask—as if you'd ever tell me—what is it about us that you fear?
And if you've nothing else to say,
How sweet is the juice that flows from my ears?

You bolster defense spending, cutting food stamps and medicaid,
Now we've got to starve so Israel gets their "lethal aid"
Some think that you'll listen, you've convinced some that you care,
But I see your disguise, all the masks that you wear
So, eat your greasy pheasant, and drink your pricey wine
Just know Your days are numbered, all you bourgeois swine!

If I go, I'll go swinging; I'll kick, punch, and scream
I'm here to feed lions, not entertain sheep,
Because if you refuse to let us dream
We will never let you sleep

For the world reveals itself for what we've known it always was
And I'm concerned that I don't have enough to offer any group
Apart from stories, old and new, a patience as thin as gauze,
My rusty baseball bat of tangled prose, and my dreams for a world anew

Where the olive orchards stand tall once more
And we've finally admitted it was never a war.
Every person sleeping in a tent is given a place to stay
And we no longer have to bury our dead at the bottom of the bay
Where we've given up the pointless task of building higher walls
And nobody gets killed for using a bathroom stall

Where pandemics are truly a thing of the past
And we know to achieve this, we must wear our masks
All the pigs have surrendered their guns and their tasers,
Our loved ones are safe from that Sergeant Eraser.
Here we teach the truth of this nation's founding, the genocide that rages on,
And we've taken real steps and stopped the destruction, we don't let the killing drag on

And we've stopped soaking the world in poison, our food, our streams, our earth and air.
Once we've peered into our souls and found our courage sleeping there
A world where we've learned from these lessons of grief
And no land is bound by the chains of the thief
An ancient, fire-driven love rushes on from sea to creek,
And we hold each other's hearts with care
Because we know that we are how the dead speak.

ANGELS OF THE STREETS

TATIANA LYULKIN

Light a fire within your soul,
Keep it burning well into the night,
It will keep you warm,
It will keep you sane,
Pray to the Angels of the Streets
When the world is stone cold
And there is no reason
To go on.

Shine the light,
Defy the darkness around you,
Even if it hurts,
Even if you're all alone,
Even when the world is asleep
Or doesn't care.

The Angels of the Streets
Will keep you safe,
You are important,
You are still here,
You matter.

Don't look back—
You're not going there,
You will survive
In this maze of darkness and despair.
There will be a new tomorrow,
There will be a life you deserve,
There will be the light at the end.

The Angels of the Streets
Are watching over you,
Get some rest—
You're safe
And you're not alone.

**BECOME A
VENDOR**
MAKE MONEY AND HELP
END HOMELESSNESS!

STREET SHEET is currently recruiting vendors to sell the newspaper around San Francisco.

Vendors pick up the papers for free at our office in the Tenderloin and sell them for \$2 apiece at locations across the City. You get to keep all the money you make from sales! Sign up to earn extra income while also helping elevate the voices of the homeless writers who make this paper so unique, and promoting the vision of a San Francisco where every human being has a home.

TO SIGN UP, VISIT OUR OFFICE AT 280 TURK ST FROM 10AM-4PM ON MONDAY-THURSDAY AND 10AM-NOON ON FRIDAY

before the rain

CATHLEEN WILLIAMS

I saw you
on my way here

but where are you now
old man
sitting on your folded blanket
by the wall?

old man, pitted
big nose face
returning my hello just
with a flicker

where are you?
survivor of rain
lover of life



poems by Kathy Takasugi

Lima bean
Embryo state
Curled against the chill
Curled against the chill
Against the bitter cold and ill!

Winter's birth
Cold morning breath
Cold air
An igloo of solitude
And a seductive lair.

Foster home
Sequestered alone
But not relinquishing the life
Seeking, finding
A solid boon
Memory of You
Kerala domain in You!

EVERY MOMENT COUNTS

SCREAMING TO BE HEARD

GEORGE FLOYD, HE CHANGED THE
WORLD VIEW

A DEFINING MOMENT

AHMAUD ARBERY

JOGGING IN GEORGIA, THAT'S ALL
RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE

ERIC GARNER'S DEATH

COMPRESSION OF NECK, CHOKE
HOLD

"I CAN'T BREATHE", HE SAID

MANUEL ELLIS

"I CAN'T BREATHE", RULED
HOMICIDE

DIED IN CUSTODY

RED-LINED NEIGHBORHOODS
GO LIVE IN YOUR SLUM GHETTOS
DENIED MORTGAGES

FOLLOWED IN OUR STORES

"GO BACK TO WHERE YOU ARE
FROM!"

RACIAL EPITHETS

RACISM IS RAMPANT

INEQUALITY IS REAL
PEOPLE LEARN TO HATE

PERSISTENT WEALTH GAP

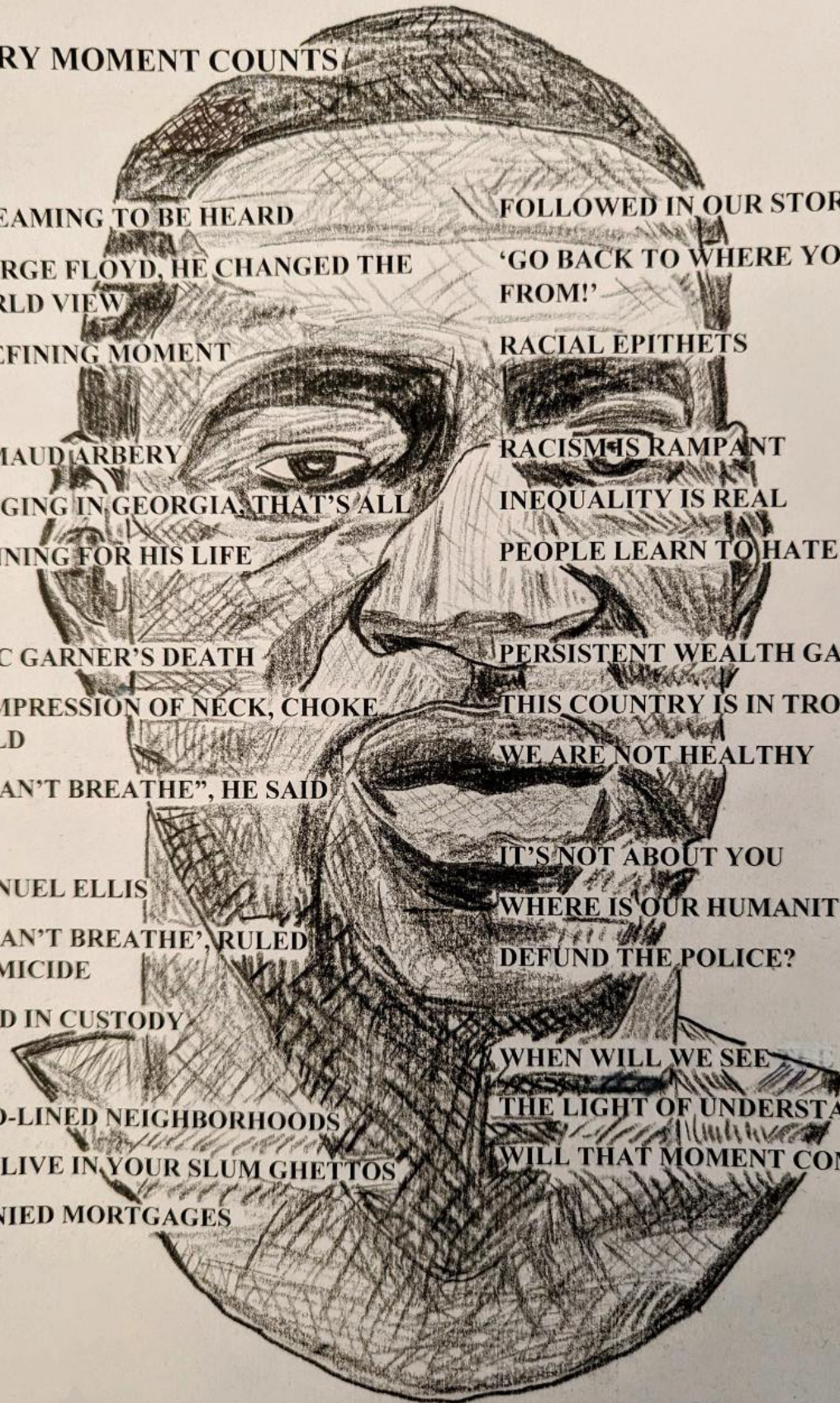
THIS COUNTRY IS IN TROUBLE
WE ARE NOT HEALTHY

IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU

WHERE IS OUR HUMANITY?
DEFUND THE POLICE?

WHEN WILL WE SEE THE LIGHT?

THE LIGHT OF UNDERSTANDING
WILL THAT MOMENT COME?



WRITING, ARTWORK, PHOTOGRAPHY, POETRY, AND MORE!

Write about your experience of homelessness in San Francisco, about policies you think the City should put in place or change, your opinion on local issues, or about something newsworthy happening in your neighborhood! Or create art that uplifts homeless people, celebrates the power of community organizing, or calls out abuses of power!

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

CONTRIBUTE TO
**STREET
SHEET**

SGT. ERASER (THEY ERASED YOUR NAME TODAY)

IAN MCKEE

They erased your name today
“Graffiti” they called it many times
Well if this sacred art
Is labeled “Graffiti,”
What do they call the rocks,
There to keep us from sleeping?
What say you, Sergeant Eraser,
How is that not a vandalous crime?

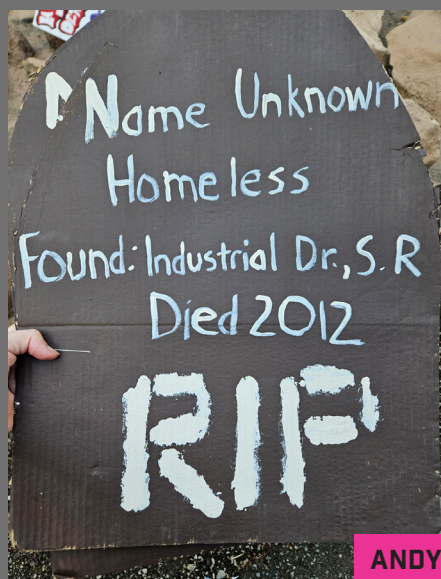
They erased your name today
“There’s a process,” they said.
Well, is there a process
To bring my friends back from the dead?
We’re not new to this, their calculated plays,
We know they hold the reins
I see their pernicion from miles away—
Their game of “permission”
Is not one I’ll play

They erased your name today,
Though not with their own hand
No, they have some folks on payroll
To desecrate memorials on stolen land
They come here with their guns and badges
And spin us all a tale,
So they can get on with their task
Of “cleaning up” OUR trail

They erased your name today,
Shrouded you in ugly paint
To ensure you’ll never speak again,
Because they know you challenged fate
And if your story flies far and wide,
What stops more scores
and scores
Of folks from following in your stride?

They erased your name today,
And threatened the artist with jail, for good measure
Spent dollars and dollars of money and time
To make this “Class 1 Bike Trail” trail fit for their first-class pleasure
Their TED talk on morals is lost to the thunder
Of compassion and decency gone six feet under
Such is as the curse of power and riches demands,
Even after we’re dead we can’t escape the sand.

They erased your name today
But they can’t erase their crimes
They already erased your life,
But we will be back:
For your story
And your memory, we’ll forever hold the line



ANDY MCKEE

OG ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL

TARIQ JOHNSON

I’m an OG on the comeback trail
Climbing the stairway to heaven
Trying to stay out of hell.
When walking on the trail of life
The road gets rough
And the going gets tough,
The tough get going

Life has a lot of ups and downs,
Crazy twists and turns,
And when you’re tripping
And slipping,
You get burned
It took me a little while to learn.

When things don’t turn out the way you expect it,
You change what you’re doing
So people can respect it and accept it.
When you give it your all and do your best
To realize Life is truly a test

I’m just an OG on the comeback trail
Climbing the stairway to heaven
Trying to stay out of hell

It’s like even when you fall and don’t get up,
You will stay stuck if you give up.
I’m speaking out to the young generation
To give them the motivation
To give life their best in any situation
And try to find peace of mind

WHAT I FOUND IN THE TL

MALIK WASHINGTON

“See, to live is to suffer, but to survive, well, that is to find a meaning in the suffering.” ~DMX Lyrics – from ‘Slippin’

I used to walk the streets of the TL looking for dope. But what I found is homeless folks showing me love and searchin’ for hope.

I’d walk aimlessly down Turk Street feeling really hurt.

I used to help house homeless folks that was a big part of my life’s work.

Lookin’ for answers to life’s deep questions inside a dirty crack pipe.

A homeless sista named Nina Boo rescued me when I tried to take my life.

I used to kick it with that brother “Gorilla” stuck in that wheelchair. He’d crack jokes that made me laugh.

I miss Gorilla. In 2021, I shared with him the little that I had – R.I.P.

I used to have philosophical conversations with my brother “Papa Smurf.” He worked for Urban Alchemy.

I saw Fentanyl overdoses, but who do we call when the ambulance don’t come?

SFPD got millions for overtime and riot gear, but when we ask for funds for housing, the City has none.

Is Lurie another false prophet? Be patient...time will tell.

Some people think they know me – they don’t. But they wish I’d go to hell.

I’ve got knocked down in the third round, but got back on my feet when I heard the bell.

What I found in the TL was resilient human beings facing adversity and strife.

The lessons I learned definitely made me stronger and most certainly saved my life.

Thank you, Street Sheet for reminding me of my purpose.

Knowledge is power, especially when you’re in the courtroom looking around clueless.

SIXTH STREET

RAY THOMPSON
[DIED HOMELESS 1990]

I've slept in the caverns
South of Market
& know the possibilities hidden
Under sidewalks
In dead buildings
Geary Street theaters
& North Beach stormed by troopers of Punk
Hidden from the fog howling
In the gates of bitter saloons
Hidden in the whimsy & violence
Flooding the streets
With knives and fast cars

I have seen legions of wounded haunting hotels
In search of yesterday's chances
That were fumbled one by one
Like silver coins rolling forever
Past the reach of dreamers
The past kissed is death
& the crippled march backwards into its wars
Dogs baying guard the keys
And wolf down every sunrise

The lost spill tears
Into October
& weary of spinning dreams
Weary of being born again

I've seen the fear in the eyes of the hooked
The cancelled eyes of forked roads never booked
& those taken ending in loveless insurrections
Of the nervous system
& empty spoons long pawned
In the starry hockshops
That claimed
No regret
Seen in whirls of snowy memory

CALL TO THE PEOPLE

CATHLEEN WILLIAMS

Today hundreds of Sacramentans live along
the river and are arrested for camping outside.

whose is this
valley where we dig down
valley that was once
a yellow glacial sea

whose are these
cottonwoods, oaks, grapevines
Sacramento currents
where we drink so deep

let's reclaim it
for the elk who once drifted
migrating through the tules
in the fog

for the peoples
who planted their villages
in season under oak, east and
west
Maidu and Miwok

our paths here
trodden into the soil
criss-crossing trails
like geese when the night is clear

paths migrating
from the late night greyhound
down Twelfth Street in the dark
footsteps invisible

let's reclaim it
so drought-struck
so poisoned
so needing of gardens and care

all is rhythmically shifting
going back and back
millennia, millennia
a sacred ground

treasure

SARAH MENEFFEE

how could I ask him
the one-pantleg man
what was in his
small treasure box
as he stood there
surrounded by nine
bored cops in black
assigned to run him
out of the alley?
as though they weren't there
he gazed motionless
at the small space
contained by his
precious box
"get back nine feet!"
they told me
when I stepped up
(but this isn't about me
I saw it then I was gone
I'm a faint echo)
and he left the alley
as far as to the corner
his rent pant leg hanging
down his hungry shin
*
what do the stories
add up to?
we wander out late
(with nowhere to
return home to)
noting each fall
into the same
human pile
of each
and all



PHOTO BY SARAH MENEFFEE

poem by
Kit Mikalson

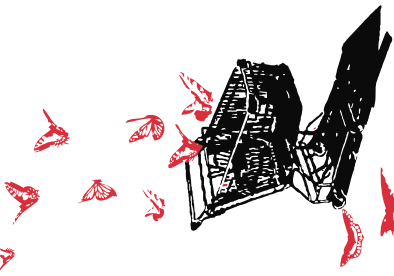
A world where everyone has a home? the
World I see sounds make-believe –
Where every table has a leaf, and
Everyone is treated with dignity.
Has this life been born of scarcity?
A friend told me that their
Home was mine, but
Is it possible to own
The safety we all need? this
World can be more than borders, bombs, and walls.
We are the seeds of the earth and we
Deserve everything we need to grow.



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Coalition on
 Homelessness
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HOME IS WHERE YOUR HEART IS

