

SPRING 2025

LETTERS TO THE FUTURE



the INSIDE  
SCOOP

STORIES

POEMS

ART

created by those  
who are or have  
been incarcerated

# the INSIDE SCOOP

SPRING 2025

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# letter from the editor

Dear reader,

Consider, if you will, that sending a letter is a low-tech form of time-travel. In a world of instant messaging, the words that many of us send each other no longer travel far through time and space. By contrast, letter mail feels increasingly slow. The moment in which you are reading this is the future for me, while the world I'm writing to you from is your past.

For people in prison, however, sending snail mail is still commonplace—one of the main ways to connect with the outside world. Whether requesting information, communicating with loved ones, filling out forms or even contributing to *the Inside Scoop*, many incarcerated Manitobans find they send a lot more letter mail than they did before they got inside.

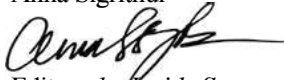
Time feels different on the inside, many people will say. They call serving in prison “doing time” because that is what it costs you. In literacy classes and submissions to *the Inside Scoop*, I notice the theme of time coming up in many ways—slowing down, speeding up, standing still, the past, and the future. And so, in this issue, we wanted to connect these ideas, using the humble letter to explore the theme of travelling through time.

Some of what you will see are poems in the form of a letter, also called ‘epistolary’ poems. Our literacy instructor, John, invented a set of prompts that people in three of our literacy classes followed, resulting in poems that served as letters to their future selves. In each poem, time travels in two directions as the poets imagine themselves looking back on their present moment—and, asking their future selves what their life looks like, twenty-five years from now.

Other pieces explore the theme of time travel in different ways—Greg’s profile talks about a program called Next Step that helps men build better futures post-incarceration. In *Dream Canteen: Sandwiches of the Future*, learners at the Remand Centre share the best sandwich they’ve ever had and the sandwich they dream of eating again. Several poems, like Leonard’s, Cheese’s, and Raymond’s deal with questions of time or fate, and several take the form of a prayer (which, if you think about it, is kind of like a letter!). And finally, a throughline in the artwork is the motif of eyes—as they look outward into the future.

In literacy and in solidarity,

Anna Sigrithur



Editor, *the Inside Scoop*

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The John Howard Society of Manitoba operates on Treaty 1 Territory, the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Ojibwe, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation.

We acknowledge that the ongoing effects of colonization have resulted in the criminalization and over-incarceration of the Indigenous community. As an organization, we recognize that understanding this connection is essential to our work as we move towards reconciliation.

PUBLISHED BY

# John Howard

THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA

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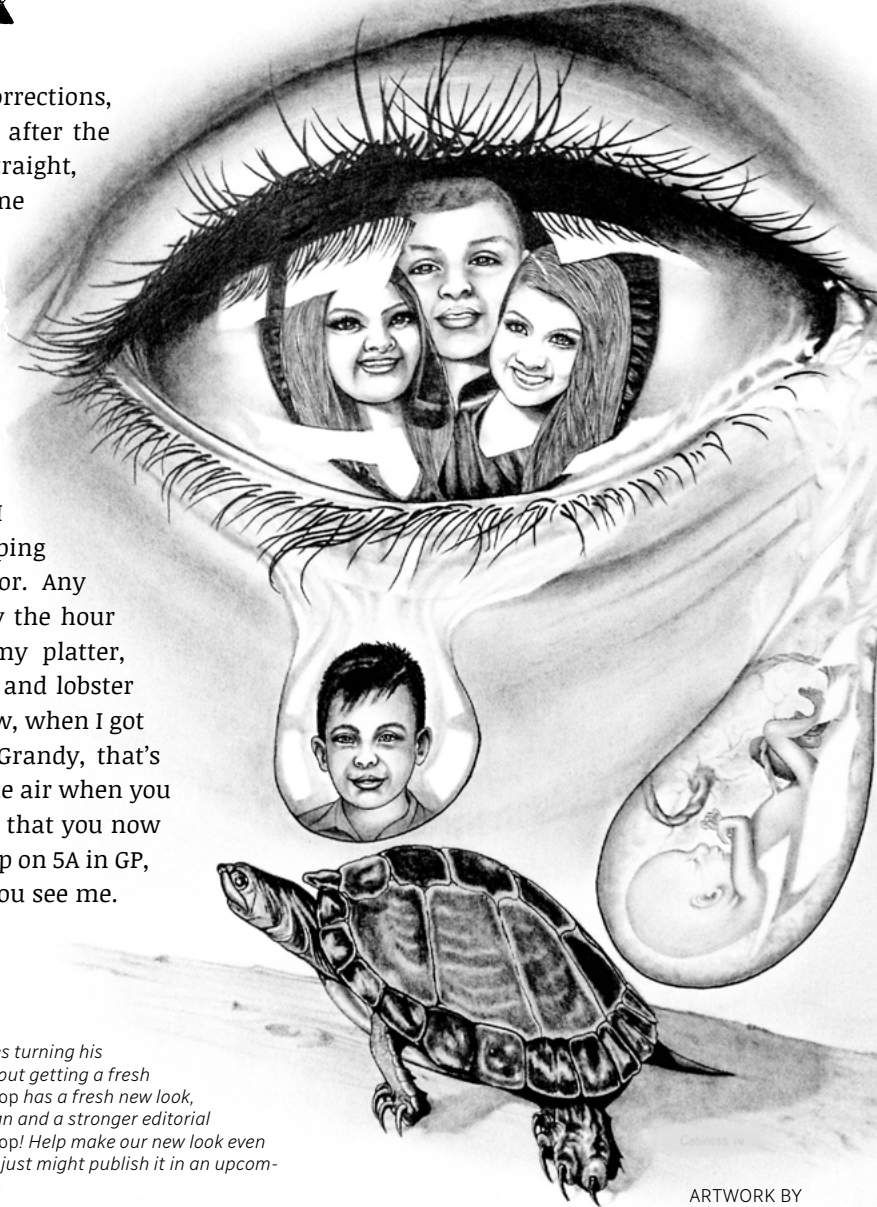
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# A New Look

BY DAVID G.

Yha I been stuck in a slump, up in corrections,  
 Canada done got Trumped, soon after the  
 elections, Ford's been tellin' it straight,  
 Canada's Not For Sale, we the home  
 of the Jets and many more, I  
 stand for Winnipeg and forever  
 Manitoba, I'm known for my  
 past and now my future. Life's  
 too short, I gotta break free, all  
 my kids need my love to nurture,  
 I need to be in their lives, not  
 missing out. They need to know  
 Daddy's home with a new look. I  
 gotta life now, a job I adore, flipping  
 vehicles with 10 keys next door. Any  
 kinda whip I can get it. Job's by the hour  
 with thousands or better on my platter,  
 never going hungry again, steak and lobster  
 with all the finest arts. They knew, when I got  
 my chance I'd be 1000% to my Grandy, that's  
 my G note family. All hands in the air when you  
 see me, I'm that guy in the hood that you now  
 see on TV, cuz all my homies be up on 5A in GP,  
 running the pen just as fast as you see me.



**Editor's note:** David's rap-style poem celebrates turning his life around and embracing the finer things—about getting a fresh "new look". As you might notice, the Inside Scoop has a fresh new look, too! Last issue, we relaunched with better design and a stronger editorial vision. We want your work to be part of the Scoop! Help make our new look even better—send us your writing or artwork and we just might publish it in an upcoming issue! See back cover for more info.

ARTWORK BY  
 EDDIE C.

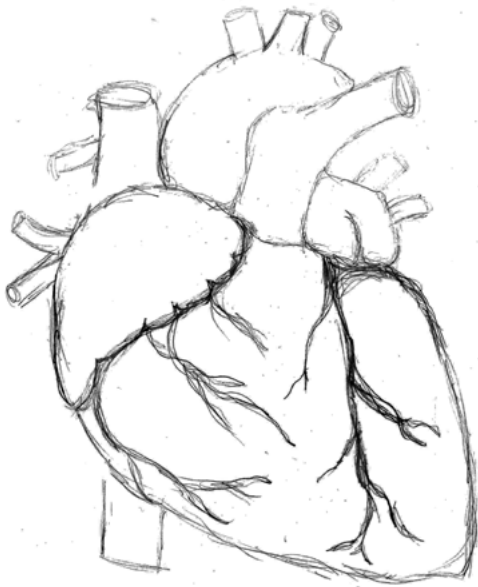
## Dear Brain

BY ANONYMOUS

Dear Brain,

I want to start by saying I'm sorry. I should've listened to your wisdom and followed your intelligence. Instead, I misled you and caused us grief. None of this is your fault. Next time I'll follow your lead, that's a promise to us both. I truly learned from my mistakes and this won't occur again. You need not worry for us, just take charge and I will listen.

Sincerely, your Heart.



## QUOTES & QUOTIENTS

"The only thing that makes life possible is permanent, intolerable uncertainty: not knowing what comes next."

*Ursula K. Le Guin*

*The Left Hand of Darkness*

"Education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today."

*Malcolm X*

"Our memory is and always will be as good as time travel gets, and in the meantime time will do the travelling for us."

*Maria Konnikova*



# TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP

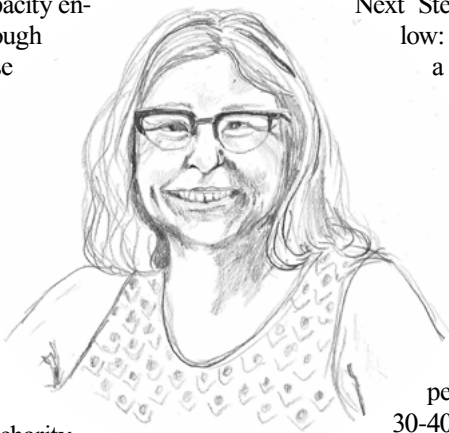
Kim McIntyre-Leighton of Future Hope's "Next Steps" program helps guys find their path to a brighter future

BY GREG T.

Meet with Kim in a musty back room in the basement of a local church, full of extra chairs and banquet tables. Kim has been on the go since 5:00 am and it's now rolling towards 9:30 pm but she is still running at maximum capacity energy. I need a coffee to get through this interview, but I get the sense she could keep going for hours.

Born in Winnipeg, Kim McIntyre-Leighton has had a 30-plus year career working in social services. She is something of a legend for the participants of Next Step, a program she now runs and has been involved with since 2008.

Next Step is a program of the charity Future Hope which was incorporated in 2011 and it allows incarcerated men to have a sense of community and support. To be honest, when I first heard about Next Step while incarcerated, my interest in it was for my own personal gain: to attend the program in Winnipeg, you get an Escorted Temporary Absence (ETA). However, once I met Kim and her team of volunteers I was awe-struck by how much they cared for and educated the people who attend the group. Kim tells me her work with Next Step is based on her belief that "one part of a person's life does not define their whole life" and founded in the "value and dignity of the person." These beliefs are what drive her passion for the advocating for prisoner's rights.



“  
*I was awe-struck by how much they cared for and educated the people who attend the group.*  
”

The result of this passion is an extremely impactful program. Next Step not only supports you in prison, but the continued outreach on parole and even long after effects ripple for ages. The recidivism of

Next Step participants is staggeringly low: the rates for those sent back on a breach is 10-15 percent, while gaining new charges is under 5 percent! That alone should be a huge selling feature for any participant.

So what happens at Next Step? Every second Monday at Rockwood (Stony Mountain Minimum), and every Wednesday in Winnipeg, Kim meets with a group of 30-40 guys. The first hour is personal development while the second hour is sharing. To become a member, all you have to do is regularly attend meetings at Rockwood. If you want to meet with her one on one, all you have to do is ask. She meets weekly with guys at Rockwood that want more out of Next Step while still on the inside.

It doesn't matter how long it's been since someone has attended—she told me she fondly remembers meeting a gentleman and it was his first visit in over five years!

Kim's dedication does not stop at meetings. Not only does she drive guys to appointments, help them find a doctor or with paperwork, and even teach them to drive or take the bus, but she regularly goes to bat for us. She sits with those of us who need it the most during parole hearings. Don't think she's

*Continued on page 6*



# Bittersweet

BY CHEESE

"THE FALL OF ICARUS"  
PUBLIC DOMAIN

Is this an end?  
Or a beginning?  
How can something so beautiful  
So wonderful hurt so badly  
Like the sun's rays magnified  
I am an ant under your glass  
Burn me  
Spare me  
The choice is yours alone  
And alone I feel  
When you keep me in darkness  
I'm attracted to your light  
Like Icarus to the sun  
Will you allow me to fall?  
My wings burning to ash?  
Or will you cover my wings with wax anew  
So we can soar as eagles  
Where eagles fear to tread  
Unafraid  
Unafraid of the light

Unafraid of life  
Discovery  
And uncovering things we never knew  
Bringing our darkness to light  
And I ask you to allow me close to you  
Please don't push me away  
Take my hand  
Don't be afraid of what we can have  
Together we can have this earth  
I would give you the moon  
    and move the earth if you ask me  
And I would offer you the sun  
    of a thousand worlds  
For a chance to see your face  
To hear your voice  
To be near you  
Because your eyes hold an ocean  
And your smile holds the sun  
But my heart holds a grave  
And the skyscrapers are just tomb stones.

*Continued from page 5*

a pushover, though. You have to put in the time; she can help you, but you have to want it.

My time with Kim has never been dull or quiet. She has the passion and energy of 10 people which is good because she is usually helping that many at one time. At first, I felt greedy for taking even more

of her time for this interview to write this profile, but I realize the accolades this woman deserves. There are hundreds, if not thousands of guys like me that could write their own piece on Kim and yet none would do her the proper justice.

BY GREG T.

# There's Nothing that Rhymes with Torture

BY RAYMOND M.

There's nothing that rhymes with torture  
 Unless you start speaking French  
 But, baby, that's way too haute couture  
 Though it could do in a cinch,  
 I don't speak of this subject so lightly,  
 No, I'm much too careful for that,  
 It's just that everyone's speaking so brazenly  
 Treading slothfully, acting slovenly, growing fat,  
 Writing complaints against the Librarian  
 Because administration embraces the rat  
 (Ah, what I wouldn't do right now  
 For a feral pet cat)  
 They write in a language that I don't speak  
 To me it's all Babylon, where Euphrates  
 and the Tigris creeks meet  
 Oh, I've written a song or two, but when I sing  
 them I sound like a freak,  
 Or a pip-squeak, which Jesus translated to "meek"  
 But by the time I inherit this black ball,  
 I'm afraid that the whole thing will reek.

Though how can you lose your lustre  
 When you've never really shone?  
 How can you be served rare and ready  
 When you're overcooked and well-done?  
 How can you face or accept it  
 When you've only ever been shunned?



ARTWORK BY  
 HARRISON B.

Who can remove the scar tissue  
 From all the places you've been burned?  
 What doctor or health would touch you,  
 You who have only ever been spurned?  
 You're waiting in a line that grows longer  
 before you  
 And where it never is your turn  
 And your debt just keeps growing faster  
 Than the wages that you earn  
 There's only one thing left to know now,  
 and that is  
 That you never learn  
 Your ashes won't be honoured, there will  
 be no solid gold urn  
 But your soul will still live on,  
 And buddy,  
 It will eternally yearn.

## How to Write an Epistle

BY JOHN SAMSON FELLOWS, LITERACY INSTRUCTOR

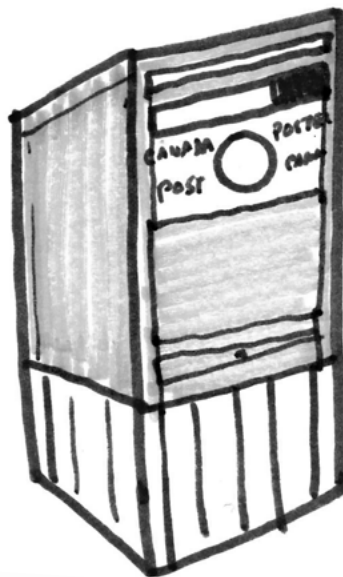
Poems written in the form of a letter are called "epistolary poems" or "epistles." These "Dear Me in 2050" epistles were written by our classes at the Winnipeg Remand Centre and Four Healing Roads Lodge. You can write one, too. Here's how:

Take ten minutes to write some questions to your 2050 self using these four prompts:

1. Ask if 2050 you remembers the smells, sounds, tastes, visuals and daily routines of where you live right now in 2025. Be as descriptive as possible
2. Ask where you live in 2050? Describe what you hope it looks and feels like.
3. Ask about how you've changed and how you've stayed the same. For example, you could ask, are you still scared of heights? Do you still vape? Can you still lift weights? Are you still mad at your brother?
4. Ask if you've done everything you wanted to do. Did you go skydiving? Did you have grandkids?

Now, use the material you've generated and start drafting the poem. You could make it four stanzas of four lines each like the examples. Turn your writing from prompt one into four lines, and so on.

It can rhyme or not rhyme and you can play with the way you break up the lines to make it look and sound interesting. Try to get a first draft done in ten minutes, then take a break and come back to it with fresh eyes. Read it aloud and keep adjusting until you are satisfied.



### Dear Me in 2050

BY CODY, DAVID, KYLE, JOSH, TIM, HUGO, KARSON, AND JARRED

Do you recall the smell of chlorine,  
burning muffins, wild cherry jello,  
Renee's butter chicken, "One minute  
remaining,"  
cells popping and Mr. Clean mopping?

Do you live in a senior's complex  
by the beach in Rio with all the sunlight,  
big windows everywhere,  
or off the grid in Newfoundland?

Are you still stubborn? A better parent?  
Still wild, or did you mellow  
to mature and clean?  
Saved a milli yet?

Did you skydive and not piss yourself?  
Did you find romance, settle  
down, do you party to remember,  
"LIFE IS A GEEFT!"



### Dear me in 2050

BY KELLY, DAVID, JEREMY, BRENT, AND SEAN

Do you remember the smell of sweat,  
old man feet and Mr. Clean cleaning?  
Breakfast every day and another tray,  
7 AM fart alarms and migraine bright lights?

Do you live in the bush, surviving,  
or at your old address?  
In a flying house or a  
shipping container underground city?

Are you a squishy skeleton or a hard old man?  
Can you still rock this haircut?  
Are you done with drugs and alive?  
Same care? Same motivation? Same friends  
and family?

Did you get in that hot air balloon?  
Did you walk to Vancouver and back?  
What keeps you ticking? Grandpa stuff?  
Is your heart still solid? Do you love yourself?

Are you a good story someone tells?



### Dear Me in 2050

BY DEREK (75), MYRON, (61), KORY (77), GREG (77)

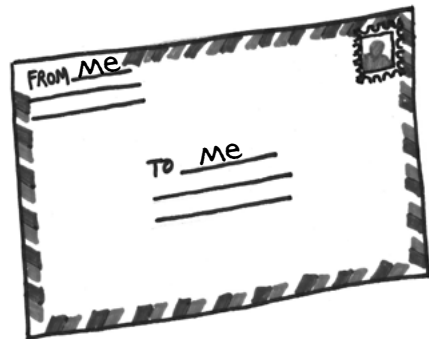
Do you recognize the smell of weed,  
or was it taken over by dirty feet  
and onions, 20 guys in the same room  
snoring in the dark with Marian's cackle.

Do you live in a real house you made  
yourself, on a beach or a breach,  
(either way your head is in the sand)  
or a wooden box, six feet under?

Did you go skydiving again?  
Get back to Europe, ink a book  
or your whole body?  
Are you rich or poor or getting by?

Are you allowed back in Vegas? Is it way too hot,  
is your wheelchair hovering,  
or is your soul melting on the street?  
Can you still move?

*Editor's note: the numbers by each name are  
the ages the poets will be in the year 2050.*



"MR. CLEAN" BY GREG T.

# Lennie's Prayer

BY LEONARD L.

When the day is over with  
 And the sun begins to set  
 I sit and think about you for so long  
 And the time when we first met,  
 You make me laugh  
 And smile with the things you have to say  
 You make me feel so special  
 With your one and only way.  
 I'm glad that you're my God  
 And I'm your follower, too  
 Because when the day is over with  
 I'll always pray to you.



ARTWORK BY OKIE

## The Dos and Don'ts of sending letters to and from prison

**C**orrectional Services Canada encourages inmates to maintain relationships with their family and friends while in custody, noting that one way to do this is by writing and receiving letter mail. So, whether you are reading this on the inside, or if you're on the outside and know someone on the inside, you can do some low-tech time travel through the post!

Remember that all letters coming in and out of a correctional institution are subject to inspection and can be stopped from reaching their destination if they contain content that's not permitted. So, if you are writing a letter to someone you know in prison:

### DO:

- Address your letter to the name of the person, C/O (short for "care of") the Institution, giving its name and mailing address. (Addresses of all provincial and federal institutions are listed online).
- Remember to put your return address so that the person can write back, or so that the letter can be returned to you if necessary.

### DON'T:

Send anything containing the following:

- anything written in code
- inappropriate content such as violence, alcohol, drugs, weapons, or obscene gestures
- revealing photos, sexually explicit content
- material which promotes hatred of any identifiable group
- stamps, envelopes, pre-stamped envelopes, writing paper, paintings or anything painted on, stickers, anything glued or taped on
- any sort of electronics (ie., a camera, a mobile phone), telephone calling cards, plastic cards, laminated cards, magnets, computer disks, tapes, CD's, cassettes or DVDs
- markers, crayons, highlighters, pens, pencils or other sharp objects
- musical cards (greeting cards that play music),
- dried flowers, seeds, feathers, etc.,
- jewellery, charms, etc., tattoo paraphernalia
- drugs, tobacco and all related products (ie., pipes, lighters, matches, etc.), weapons, unknown substances

# Finally, I'm There

BY LEONARD L.

I carry the scars of my past, I know  
they won't be the last.—

Been there once or twice before,  
never will I go through that awful door

Nothing but badness, sadness, madness and more.

I've lived a tumultuous life, my heart is done in  
from so much strife

I've come to this point where my soul craves for more,  
More of all that's good for me and all that's in store—

Will she want me being so broken?

This man who's so loud and very outspoken?

My only desire is one of a million

To know the blood of the cross  
and join with the billions.

I'm making peace with the demons inside me

The ones in the darkness the light will shine  
and they'll see.

I know I'm a good man, outta the pit  
with the Lord's strong hand—

He will help me through, my mind is open,  
I will be true, I'm always hoping.

I love you God never keep me out

I pray to you now: no more clout, heed my words,  
see my good deeds I'm happy all

I'm outta the weeds—

Take me now and all of my sin

I come to you Lord

I'm gonna begin—

Notice this heartbroken man, I come to you,  
I won't be chokin'—

Put your hands on me, come down from the sky, I  
truly welcome you lord, this humble guy—

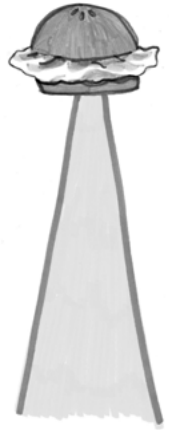
I accept you now, my heart is open, I'm gonna be pure,  
no more mopin'.



ARTWORK BY HUGO R. F.



# DREAM CANTEEN



## Sandwiches of the Future

*Incarcerated people in Manitoba have access to a canteen where they can purchase snacks and basic supplies. But options are limited. We asked students in the John Howard literacy class at the Winnipeg Remand Centre to describe the best sandwich they had in the past, and one they dream of eating again. Here are some of their submissions:*

"My description of my favourite sandwich would be from my hometown in Ottawa from a little Italian grocery store called Derango's it was a prosciutto and capicola sub with homemade bread and spicy eggplant, green olives and mayo." - Josh I.

Grilled cheese with bacon. I love cheese and bacon and both together is great, especially with extra cheese, with whole wheat bread. BUTTERED with mayo. - Brayden

To make my sandwich, start with cutting salami using a meat slicer. Adjust setting to 20. Smear it with a bottle of mustard, then wrap it in saran wrap. unwrap it and eat it. Would've included more but I'm in Remand. Forgot what the others taste like. I call it a double. - John S.

It was a sub, medium size, super loaded bbg, spicy beef and loads of cheese. The smell of the BBQ was amazing. It was from a stand on an ice road I drove with my family. - Harrison B.

I LIKE A COLDCUT SANDWICH WITH HOT PICKLES.  
- LANCE B.

I enjoy the ham and cheese sandwich from Firehouse Subs with the nice toasted bread and perfectly melted cheese. - Cody H.

Start with two slices of my grandmother's homemade bread. Then I grab a piece of cracker barrel marble cheese. A healthy portion of honey ham, and turkey breast and a home made honey mustard sauce with a decent amount of head lettuce with a dash of salt and pepper! - Jerome

There's a Portuguese sandwich called Bifana. Fresh, sweet Portuguese rolls right out of the oven, brined pork loin cutlets marinated in pimento; red pepper sauce, banana peppers, pimento sauce mustard, and caramelized onions you make yourself with baking soda. Eat with Viena Do Costelo custard tarts.  
- Tim A.

*Editor's note: Viena Do Costelo is a bakery on Sargent Ave in Winnipeg.*



## Letter 2 my Creator

BY PATRICK

Take away the pain when I pray 2 the heavens, tell me how to become stronger. All the days and all the nights, I think of u. No matter where I am, you are always with me. How is it possible to feel your spirit, fill my heart and soul with pure love? Thank you for taking away my pain. If there is a way to worship your word without shedding a tear, then you are the savior of my soul. Always 4 ever like dat. I love u every time every day. I send this to my God, a letter to my Creator.



ARTWORK BY  
STEPHANIE S.

## Me, You, and Us

BY TIM A.

**Why me?**

Ever since I can remember I've had something weighing me down—like gravity. Imagine you're climbing a tree. I can't explain this phenomena.

**Why me?**

**Why you?**

When I look across the way I feel your disappointment. I can feel the color blue being worn on you. I no longer have the map I drew. Can't stop these rancid thoughts now, I'm sorry, I'm no longer true.

**Why you?**

**Why us?**

It started quite small, but it has grown 'til its bust. I dropped it—it was an accident I swear. I stare and wonder, "Can I rebuild this trust?" I feel eyes all around, staring. This can't be real. I must not fuss, but I know I failed.

**Why us?**

**As life moves on earth, some feelings get stronger.**

Hands reaching from quicksand depths, swatting at my ankles, like mosquitoes, trying to pull.

Anger is manifesting inside like a raging bull, but at the same time I can feel your delicate touch screaming CALM.

I have the whole world in my palm.

I can't contain my excitement.

I see light at the end of this tunnel now, filled to the brim,

but the closer I get the more it grows dim.

All I can think is, "really, Tim?"

Why am I now surrounded by water? Do I run? Lord knows I can't swim.

Life is fading fast and it's looking real grim.

How can this be? I have no idea—it must be a test. But why as a question? Or an answer, you ask? I know even less. As I finish this quest one thing is certain—

there's me, you, and us. I'd say that's the best.

I thank you for everything. You're my angel.

I'm blessed.

# PARDONS

(Record Suspensions)



CRIMINAL  
RECORD

## Is your dated criminal record preventing you from...

- getting the job you want?
- enjoying your quality of life?

Or maybe you are embarrassed about a criminal record from years gone by.

## You have options.

Explore your eligibility for a pardon with our Record Suspension Support Caseworkers. We can help you with the process of obtaining a Record Suspension, beginning with your eligibility. Once it is determined whether you are a possible candidate, we can further assist you throughout the application process.

## Contact us!

### George Chartrand

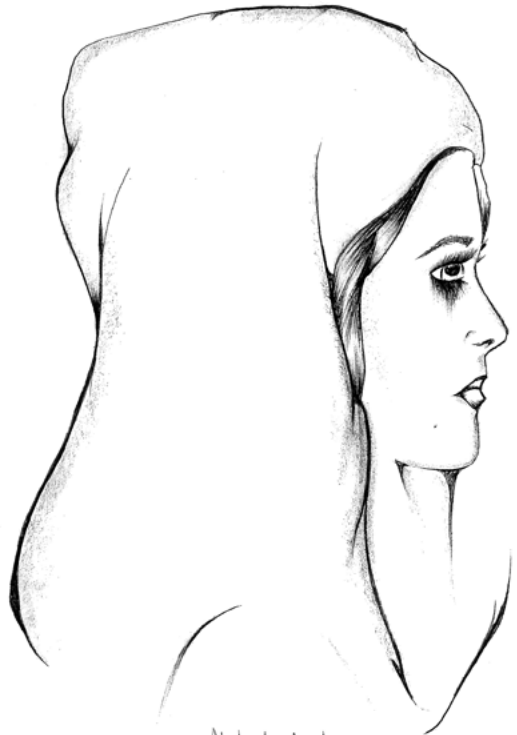
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### Michael Mahon

Record Suspension Support Caseworker  
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## John Howard

THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF MANITOBA



Stephanie S.

"WOMAN FACING EAST"  
BY STEPHANIE S.

Inuktitut

Word of the Day



future

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Sivuniksavut

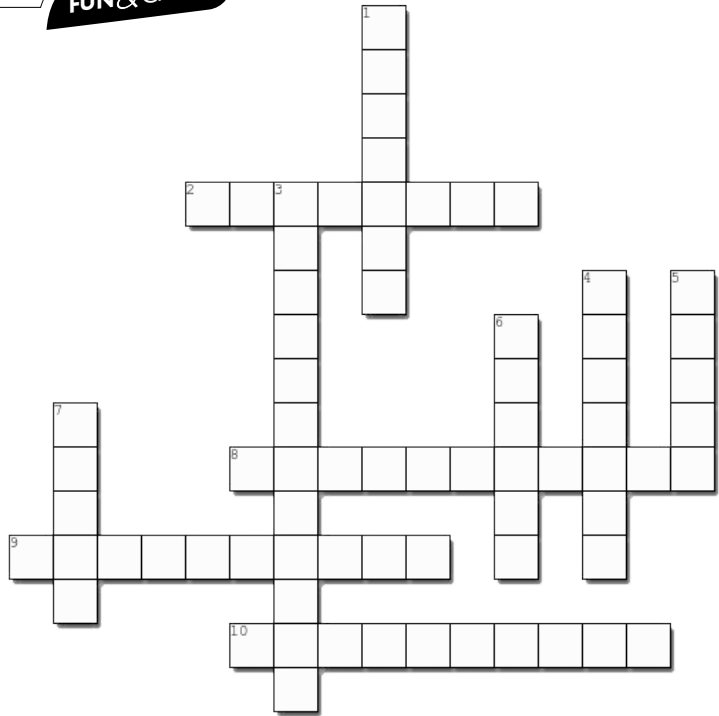
*Editor's Note: Thanks to  
Max Angoo at Tunngasugit  
Inuit Resource Centre for  
translation.*

**DOWN**

1. Raymond says nothing rhymes with this unpleasant thing
3. Inuktitut for “future”
4. The cleaning product mascot named in two of the epistolary poems
5. Las \_\_\_\_\_, mentioned in the poem by Kory, Roger and Myron
6. Portugese sandwich name
7. The other body part the “heart” writes a letter to

**ACROSS**

2. The insect mentioned in Tim’s poem
8. What Cheese compares to tombstones in the last line of his poem
9. According to the editor, letters are a low-tech form of what?
10. The organization that runs the Next Step program



A large rectangular area enclosed by a dotted border, intended for drawing a picture related to the crossword puzzle.

*Postcard from the Inside*

Draw a picture in the blank space above and send it to us!  
We might publish it in the next issue of the Inside Scoop!

Submit your artwork and written submissions along with the waiver (see back cover)

Call for Submissions



ARTWORK BY  
JEREMY T.

**We welcome your submissions of writing and artwork!** If you want to work with an editor on your piece, please indicate that in the waiver and tell us where to reach you.

Send submissions and a signed waiver (below) via Canada Post to:

**Anna Sigrithur, John Howard Society of MB,  
583 Ellice Ave, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7**

**Or, email them to**

[asigrithur@johnhoward.mb.ca](mailto:asigrithur@johnhoward.mb.ca)

**Did you know?** If you are incarcerated in Manitoba, calling John Howard is a free phone call, so give us a shout if you have questions!

(204) 775-1514

ext. 112 (Anna) or ext. 113 (John).

(Not incarcerated? You're still welcome to call, of course!)

## The Inside Scoop Waiver

Please attach this to any artwork or writing you submit to The Inside Scoop.  
Mail to: Anna Sigrithur, John Howard Society of MB, 583 Ellice Ave. Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1Z7

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of piece: \_\_\_\_\_

I am open to discussing edits to my work (circle one):                      Yes                      No

I give permission for my work to be printed in *The Inside Scoop* and confirm that I am submitting my own authentic original work. I understand that my work may also be used in other John Howard Society publications such as workbooks and facilitation materials, as a handout in group classes, or for future promotional or fundraising projects. I understand that all rights to my work remain with me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Where would you like  
edits and/or copies of *The  
Inside Scoop* mailed to?  
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*Note: We reserve the right to edit submissions, and may contact you about edits to your work. We will not print anything containing sexism, racism, homophobia or transphobia, gang symbols, or that glorifies violence, drug use, or gang involvement.*