

Jean Valjean has his revenge, the man awakens, who was still all bleeding from the lacerations of his destiny, from the obscurity of his virtue. – Victor Hugo

I often wonder how much our hearts can endure, or can it be that we have already arrived and the endurance is simply that we have come to discover the depths of love and the mystery of how much joy and pain can be encapsulated in a four letter word. For me to claim that I've always had these inspirations would be foolish. The reality is, no one wants to hear the reality, it's just a mechanism we use to activate the isms at our disposal! Please bear with me – my truth is, I used to be a selfish and harsh individual who went through much of his life destroying the ones I loved in word only but not in deed, and ultimately created a lot of victims who will always be connected to me in the most painful of ways and memories. I'm currently serving a life sentence for 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Murder and have come to a deeper realization of how my crime has affected my victims, their families, my family, the community and the things I've changed in my way of thinking and behavior. Recognition alone is not acceptance, but simply an awareness that begins the journey towards teaching us how to become accountable in recognizing our obligations to our victim(s).


These thoughts are merely an introduction towards the vision of accountability, healing and restoration for all victims and offenders. My hope is to reach out to the survivors and those individuals who are seeking to make a positive and nurturing change in lives, their community and throughout the world.

At a time when the world is shadowed in hate, racism and darkness, let's be light to those in need of healing. God alone can only open the heart for change; it is up to us to trust Him enough to guide us from within towards humility and seeking to help others beyond our own desires.

Seeking... I'm not, but willing to discover things beyond myself, circumstances and a life sentence. In the hope of contributing at least a moment of something good and lasting, one heart, and one person at a time, this is my reasonable service.

I wrote this poem a few months ago and I hope it helps to convey how I feel about change. Coming soon the P.A.R.A. (Prisoners Advocating Restorative Accountability), website.

Respectfully,



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## With These Two Hands

*With these two hands, I've crawled from troubled birth, stretching forth across time, spaces and places to rise like dawn's first cries upon the wings of morning kisses.*

*With these two hands, I shield the brilliant sorrow of knowledge, eagerly parting the greener grasses of an un-promised tomorrow, humbly coming to rest in the peaceful embrace of contentment, no longer resentment.*

*With these two hands, I've learned to build bridges, much more than structures - cold as steel, I've come to know the heart is real, with each new thrill of joy, a smile, some laughter, I'm forever after...*

*With these two hands, I've grown to gather those virtues I'd rather possess in all their loveliness held close to my chest so that one - day I might profess they're everlastingness.*

*With these two hands, I severed your bond from Mother's nurturing womb and watched you open your beautiful little mouth like an exotic flower in bloom.*

*With these two hands, I've beheld God's gaze and the miracle of life right before my very eyes, as I'm left in a trance of blissful beauty as I hear your first cries.*

*With these two hands, I've watched you magnificently blossom with each passing word encapsulated with all the love and wondrous things so rare - as this moment, I embrace with no regret, with these two hands humbly folded on bended knee I'm slowly molded.*

*With these two hands, I hold the memory of hope, as I gently wipe away the tears that choke the breath of new life your whispers softly spoke, as I slowly drift - away... it's a new day, it's a new day.*

*With these two hands, raised in obedient surrender, Autumn's first rains help me to remember, with these two hands I lovingly embrace... it's a new day, it's a new day.*

By  
  
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