

CONTENTS

with the Blog @
BETWEENTHEBATS.ORG GREY/PAYKELSCOLLECTIVE

4² A free mind

6 Yeah You:

7 RECALCITRANT!

8 first Stone

10 a damn shame

12 King

15 THE WALL

14 CURSE OF THE DRAGON GOD

16 LOST IN THE SHUFFLE

17 ENCOURAGE YOURSELF

18 LETTING GO

20 BREAKING THE CHAINS

22 "Mr. Officer Part II: The Dream"

24 @ Golgotha w/ Joe Joe

51 CALIFORNIA ON BLAST

52 NOTICE OF DEATH

54 THE BIG SLEEP

56 "revolution"

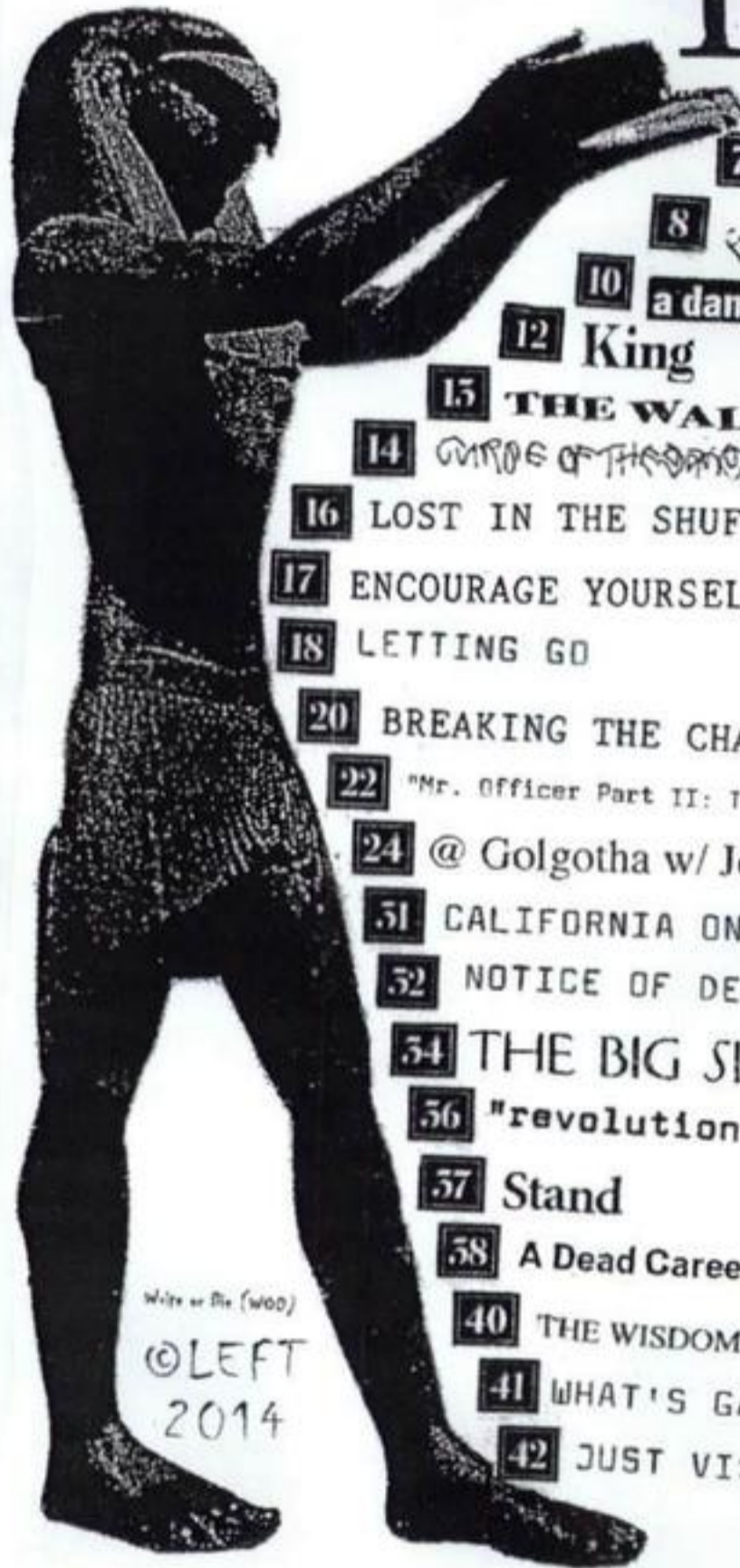
57 Stand

58 A Dead Career Move

40 THE WISDOM OF AGE

41 WHAT'S GANGSTA

42 JUST VISIONS



Write or Die (WOD)

©LEFT
2014



A free mind



Piankhi

The person you're seeing in illustration is a man named TEHUTI, or THOTH. Tehuti is said to have invented writing. You'll find this scribe in hieroglyphic images and wall sculpture with a papyrus reed and stylus, and often holding in his left hand an ANKH (pronounced: äNGK), an object shaped like a cross for eternal life in ancient Egypt, and the source of my pen name P-ANKH-E (Piankhi).

I consider this ancient scribe the iconic representation of our writing collective. The introduction of writing to the world brought about a revolutionary change in a truly fundamental way. The influence of writing and recorded history have carried with it, enlightenment and reflection in ways that transcend the limitations of geography and time. The inspiration of age-old stories of those who endured oppression and tribulation of all kinds before us, and those who've found refuge and redemption in expressing themselves through written word -- the pure weight of what they were able to articulate and convey had proven to be a force more just and powerful than the authorities who condemned them.

Not only that, but for the vast majority of those in prison, writing is the only consistent source of communication with the world beyond the very confines of cells. My years of reading and writing while in solitary confinement have also become of profound importance in changing the way I perceive the world around me. Simply writing letters to family and friends had become an introspective exercise in comprehending complex emotions and articulating complex thoughts. As I developed a practice of reading, and then, processing that information through notes and articles I've written over the years, the process of digesting these words gave me perspective and helped to determine my direction and interactions within and beyond confinement.



Those who write know that thoughtful and well-written words can have an effect on those reading them, and an even more profound effect on the writer, as the writing process itself is often transformative. The practice of exercising ones' mind in a positive way invites new possibilities to ourselves as well as to others -- a most invaluable long-term life lesson.

The late Nelson Mandela wrote that "prison was a kind of crucible that tested man's character. Some men, under the pressure of incarceration, showed true mettle, where others revealed themselves to be less than what they had appeared to be." I like that, for me "true mettle" has come through the introspection and development of perspective that is inherent in any writing process. It has provided me with an understanding of myself, and more

importantly, my "place" in the world that transcends physical confinement. And, if it reads as if I'm romanticizing, it's just that affect I'm passing onto you through my words.

The last weapon in a prisoner's arsenal, is his/her pen -- that which only a free mind can wield to an effect.

This isn't just my story though, nor is it one anywhere near its conclusion. This is the story of Write Or Die.

CURSE OF THE GANG GOD

I am the Gang God,
 Pledge your allegiance to me, I will give thee
 a gang you can call your own
 a hood you can claim as home
 and wars you can desert-storm.
 I'll give you an identity and rep for the streets, but first,
 forsake everything you know including your beliefs,
 but heed this warning my price is steep.
 I am the Gang God,
 suckle my poison let it corrupt your soul
 become my obedient servant bound to my code.
 Come, let me engulf you in my darkness and blind you from the
 truth,
 turn you loose in a city of madness where you're despised for
 what you do.
 So forth, do my bidding, let my destruction reign supreme,
 and when anyone ask why you do what you do, tell 'em, 'cause you
 don't give a fuck about thing.
 I am the Gang God,
 I'll satisfy your psychopathic thirst,
 to do dirt, to do hurt, and what's worst, here's my curse:
 I demand blood, chaos and crime, and everything I give you, I'll
 take back, because I always change my mind.
 I am the Gang God,
 I'm gonna make sure you get betrayed by someone close,
 to demolish all your trust, faith, and hope.
 I will have you believing in nothing but the seven deadly sins,
 and while you're thinking you are the architect of your life I'm
 the demonic force within.
 I am the Gang God,
 let's get something straight,
 the only thing I want from you is your violence and hate.
 You're nothing but a pawn to me, while you talking about keeping
 it real.
 I'm plotting with your enemies.
 Fool, you think loyalty is the answer but it's the riddle to this
 game.
 do or die is not a paradise but a hell that follows your feet.
 You wanted in, now you having doubts, so-call love ones took the
 stand against and struck your ass out.
 I am the Gang God,
 only one of us can rise the other must fall,
 you're my sacrificial lamb so I'll let you rot behind the walls.
 Yeah, I'm gonna be the first to greet you when you get paroled,
 here's a blunt, here's a gat, you know how it goes.
 You won't dare reject me because we're of one mind,
 and after all you been through you'll still throw up my sign.
 But I'll turn my back on you faster than you did Christ.

you seen as do it once, you'll know I'll do it twice.
 I love watching you suffer, seeing your family brought to tears,
 your meaning of staying down means you got to always live in
 fear.
 I am the Gang God,
 the antithesis to life because I crave death,
 the only future I promise is no cease - no rest.
 I don't give a fuck about prayers, save them for a priest.
 you want out, you got to answer to the beast.
 Redemption is not sold, redemption is earned, and it's not about
 the mistakes you made but the lessons you've learned.
 but I shouldn't be telling you this because it's too much like
 right,
 so if you thinking about changing the path you're on you know you
 got to fight.
 I am the Gang God,
 I'll do anything to keep you in my vicious tomb,
 kill your love ones, turn homeboy against homeboy causing
 unforgivable wounds.
 I'll take you and spit on your story;
 an OG banger still searching for glory.
 And when all is said and done, and judgement comes,
 put the barrel to your temple and let regret be the gun.

BY
ATANT



WRITE
OR
DIE

LOST IN THE SHUFFLE

I, sit here in prison, with a book and pen in my hand. Daily, I find myself trapped within my thoughts, trying to capture the very essence of life and the worth of my existence. Within myself, a battle seems to occur at times between my ego, pride, and the demons of my past. This is a three headed monster, that lives in all of us and plays a part in our shortcomings, as people. There's only one formula when it comes to putting a giant to sleep, and that would be the sleeping pill of knowledge.

Sharing my journey and the things that I've learned over the years, has become a mission of mine. In doing so, I hope to save someone from being burned of their freedom, parenthood, and sanity.

Every morning when I awaken inside this dark and cold cell, I'm slapped with the reality of my life being lost in the shuffle of misfits. But I still think of the future as an astonishing door opening for any/all possibilities while learning from the past, but not allowing it to decide the future.

By: Young Boo



ENCOURAGE YOURSELF



ENCOURAGE YOURSELF

In this life you need more than hope. Hope is a good thing; probably the best of things. But hope alone has no power to undo your circumstances, or change your future.

In this life you need more than a dream. To dream is to imagine a better life for yourself. But without blood, sweat, and tears, dreams become fantasies that eventually disappear.

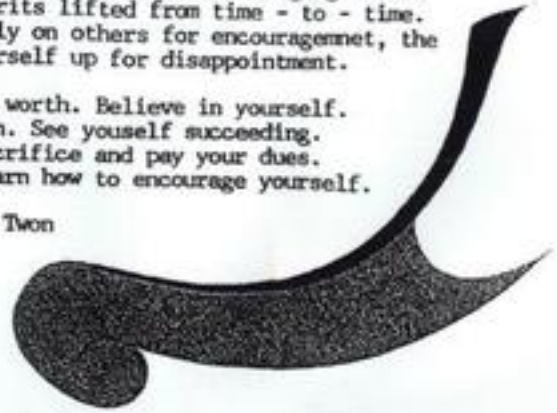
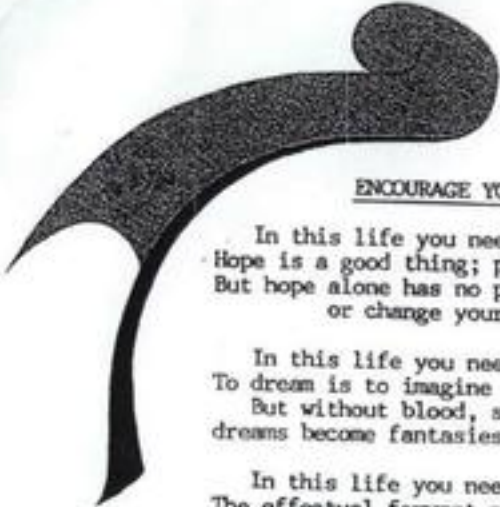
In this life you need more than a prayer. The effectual fervant prayer of a righteous man avails much. But sitting around everyday waiting for the heavens to open will get you no further than where you are right now.

In this life you need more than things. Things can accessorize and adorn your life. But things can never make you great. Greatness is in you. Become someone in life.

In this life you need more than encouraging words. We all need our spirits lifted from time - to - time. But the more you rely on others for encouragement, the more you set yourself up for disappointment.

Know your self - worth. Believe in yourself. Be determined to win. See yourself succeeding. Be willing to sacrifice and pay your dues. Most importantly learn how to encourage yourself.

By: Twon



Write Or Die: Zine Project

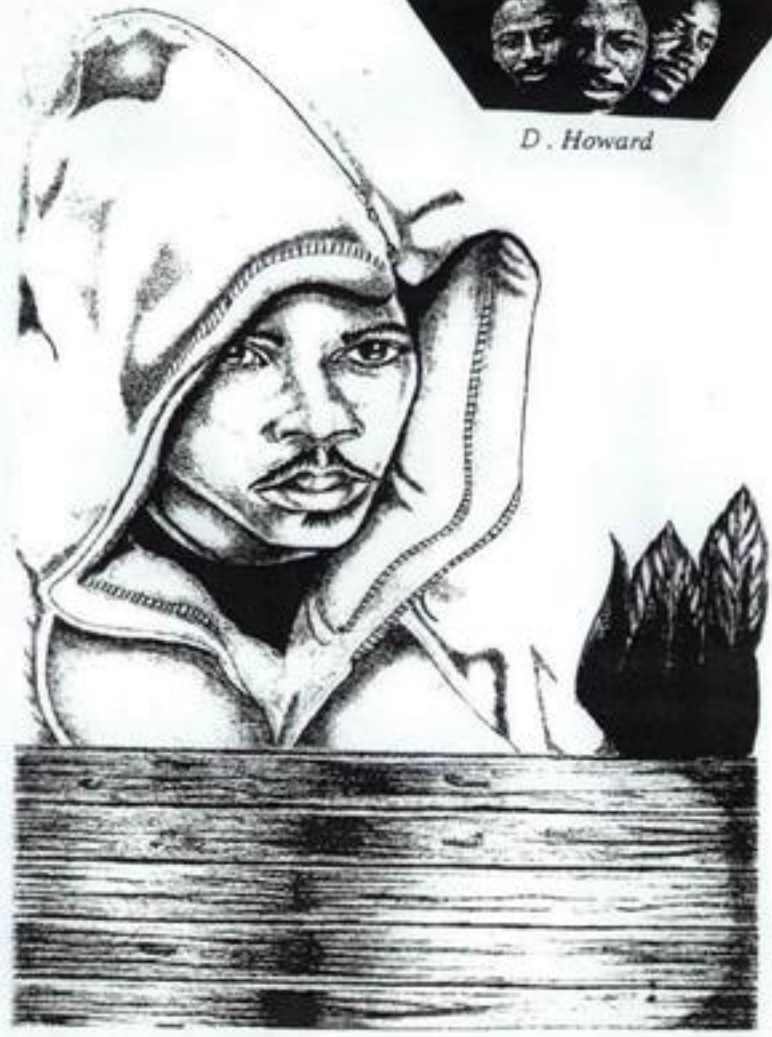
"revolution"

Everything I love
 is dead or dying.
 Everything I owned
 has been stolen or destroyed.
 Everything I want
 I must fight and bleed for.
 Everything I am
 I must struggle to be.
 Everything I need
 I have earned and deserved.
 Everything I trust
 has been challenged and tested
 Everything I believe
 is strong and firm.
 And
 Everything I seek
 lies with Revolution!
 Revolution!
 Revolution!

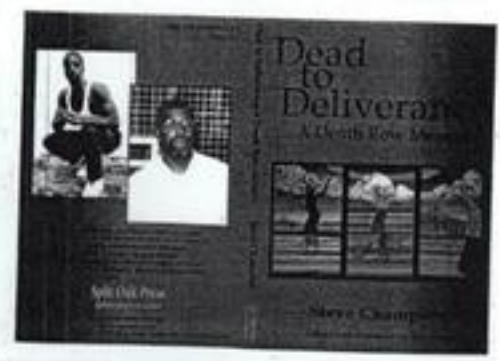
By Adisa Kamara



D. Howard



D. Howard



Steve Champion is on California's death row at San Quentin. Send our brother some love and light: Steve Champion, C-56001, San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin CA 94974. And read his book, "Dead to Deliverance: A Death Row Memoir," available at amazon.com or Split Oak Press, splitoakpress.com.

Write Or Die: Zine Project



RECALCITRANT!

Flashing back on life's journey - from the past to the present, reflecting on each path taken, and every foot step left - most bring a smile, yet a few I do regret! At the top of the list is all the jail time that I've spent. Such an ugly existence!.....yet more than half of my life has been confined to a cell within the system! "Held Captive!" I live on a concrete plantation; "where I'm considered CONDEMNED!!!". Property of a nation that professes to be civilized and fair. A symbol for Justice and Freedom, she preaches to the world, expecting all to adhere! The heavy hand of oppression is always there - a constant reminder for the timid! But for those who see clear - *Racism & Inequality* are still ever present. Standing strong without fear has been a tool for resisting and rebelling, which is what I've done since seeing my Pops get murdered when I was seven.

Trauma: Inflicted by pernicious circumstances. *Poverty stricken!* To get rich was the main objective - *Ambitious!* It was imperative, in order to uplift my family from horrible conditions. Every night Moma prayed for our lives to become different - yet every morning I would awake to an empty belly and still feeling stricken! Fairy tales in the ghetto are something that rarely happens! I never saw a happy ending!

I grew up in the slums; dope houses; I spent most of my time chasing money avidly! - Something I learned from this avarice Capitalist System! - Don't judge me - you can't relate to my struggles unless you've actually lived this: Roaches and rats taking over your kitchen....Hot oil burning on the stove, in case the pigs enter!! In every ghetto; on the street, avenue, boulevard or block. There is a story with a similar twist - Black, White, Yellow, Brown.....we're all up against it! There is always crooked pigs out to get ya! - That's what comes with being RECALCITRANT; and bucking against their system!!!

Ever since I was an infant, I had no father to keep me in check. He was killed by racist pigs - 20 bullets tore into his flesh! I witnessed him bleed in the streets, as he took his final breath. I even saw his soul leave his body (like smoke)....through the holes left in his chest! A normal childhood? Yeah, I wish! The only thing normal about it was *another black family being victimized by the very system that took an oath to serve and protect them!*

Now you know my story, which is not much different from a lot of others who had to live it. So, am I being pretentious to believe someone 'outside' the system might actually have listened and have genuinely cared about what I've been through? Do I still have your attention?

Aswad Pops aka "Toth"
California Death Row

