

HOPE FOR THE HOPELESS

For those of you not already aware: I teach a creative writing class here at the prison, for the prisoners that get their GED (or already have it, or a high school diploma), and show an aptitude for advanced writing.

I bring this up, because one of my students--is now published!

That's great for him, and it reflects well on both my teaching and the class in general. My goal is to get them ALL published. Akin to how the late (and great) Kurt Vonnegut did with students like, Andre Dubus, and many others. Students like Gail Godwin, who went on to become a successful novelist. Vonnegut wrote to her in 1971 that she was one of his the students who "get me all excited about life and work again, and make me think about new stuff ..." (Kurt Vonnegut: Letters, Delacorte Press 2012).

I understand that; because I too grow from my students.

I have a whole masters degree (MFA) worth of information in my head, accumulated through arduous study, and trial and error, for five years solid. All I do still--mostly--is live and breath writing: taking breaks to draw, paint, read (reading for reason, never really leisure), and all the typing. Typing consumes so much time--especially on an old typewriter.

And the noise.

I know the inmates in cells around me hate my typewriter.

But what can I do?

One day it'll all pay off. I hope.

If not; that's okay, at least I kept myself busy in a positive way.

With one of my students now published in the October 2015 issue of "The Sun," I can say I really did help inspire another to do better. (I have a piece of my own writing coming out in the September 2015 issue of "The Sun.")

It's a great feeling to see your work in a literary journal, that over 70,000 people read! To have that justification of being a writer. Being accepted among the writing community. It gives a writer the needed confidence to continue writing. It's a hard life, especially from here, and every little (or big) boost helps.

Maybe one day someone will want to read my books.

Maybe one day someone will read a book from one of my students.

Maybe someone, some day, will do better; because of it.

But what do I know?

It's not like I've been through Inferno, and live to tell about it--but wait ... Inferno is from where these words originate! Maybe my kids one day will understand it all--but in a way, I hope they don't. I'll accept their bitterness at me, when it means that they have not endured the suffering it takes to understand someone like me. I'd rather them be happy, than share in my sadness. I'd rather be alone, than drag ANYONE down with me.

But I'm not hopeless, I have hope, and things can change.

Laws are changing, the prison is evolving. My dystopian views of current America are--with the country--changing. There may be hope for the country yet. My heart is full of love, not hate, or want of revenge. The want for an eye for an eye--usually costs an eye (or two): it only ends badly. Moving on past the past, is the only way to the future. (As stupid as that sounds)

But what do I know?

