

# Looking Inside Poetry & Photography

*Poets of the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility*

Cindy  
Tina  
Candace  
Mary  
Yarenis  
Brenda  
Jackie  
Schwanika  
Alechmarie  
Nadiyah

With poems inspired by  
*Jonathan Becker: Lost Time*  
at the Katonah Museum of Art  
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## ***Building Bridges: Prison Arts Initiative***

Pamela Hart, Teaching Artist  
Katonah Museum of Art  
Rehabilitation Through the Arts  
Fall 2024

## **Floating**

By Cindy

A view of the room becomes a need to surrender  
Accepting what has happened, a sense of euphoria  
Per the paradoxical yet pompous passion  
Reclaiming this stark landscape, drunkenly dignified  
Way of life, seems so benevolent  
Hides the truth behind this secondhand lifestyle

Playing an imitation game concealed in this lifestyle  
Imagining your reaction watching me surrender  
Kudos to the knowledgeable blaming those seeking benevolence  
Hoping to be overloaded with euphoria  
Defying the degenerates disapproving dilemmas, so dignified!  
Flattered by the compliments, oozing with passion

What does the future hold for those with fake passion...  
How can someone omit the truth behind their lifestyle...  
Hoping to be someone truly dignified  
Without losing one's identity, this need to surrender  
Spreading the joy, releasing mindless euphoria  
Praying the charity convinces all of my benevolence

Praying the charity convinces you of my benevolence  
The moves one makes, filled with such passion  
One can't help but feel a sense of euphoria  
Admirable choices, not a hazardous lifestyle  
Pining for love...must I surrender?  
This feeling seems heavenly and dignified

This false life, destructive yet dignified  
Pretending...any truth behind the benevolence?  
Fortune, fame and glory...why should I surrender?  
This is what dreams are made of, such passion  
Deep down, yearning for a different lifestyle  
Are you listening? Do you still feel euphoric?

What you think you feel is not euphoria!  
Give up the materialistic shit and finally live dignified!  
Had it all wrong, a pretentious lifestyle  
Do you know what it means to be truly benevolent?  
To live a life worth living, a life full of desire, passion  
Everything must go, you must surrender

Live, breathe...euphoria, I have now surrendered  
Live a life that's dignified, this matters, full of passion  
A healthier lifestyle, eternally benevolent



## **If Didn't Break**

By Cindy

If you are the board's shadow  
I am the glare full of deception  
If you are the buoys in the distance  
I am the spear that pierces through the hardships  
If you are the escape into a Zen state of mind  
I am the naked novice nodding away nonsensically  
If you are the imperfect waves licking the crevices  
I am the building block guarding your wound  
If you are the illusion of desired safety  
I am the epitome of the Despondent, roaring with frustration  
If you are the salt that cleanses life's chaos  
I am the truth hidden behind judgement  
If you are the garbage sinking deep within oceans  
I am the paradox of life's complex simplicities  
If you are the steps established by the jagged rocks  
I am the breath that listens to the wind  
If you are the destructive riptide, wilder than any drug  
I am the dream that transforms into reality  
If you are the sea breeze whispering advice blamelessly  
I am the warrior patiently waiting for mayhem  
If you are the remedy for the broken  
I am the snail creeping into a hopeful future  
If you are an island irrevocably isolated  
I am the reserved restoration requisitioned by redemption  
If you are the shadow of eternal peace  
I am the glare full of deception



## Grandma

By Tina

Memories that lay  
in my mind  
recipes to pass  
onto you from

my mother to yours  
and now they are  
all yours to  
share, create and pass  
down to the  
newer generations

Hugs, cookies, hot cocoa  
have flowed into many  
cups, hearts, hours  
of frosted wisdom

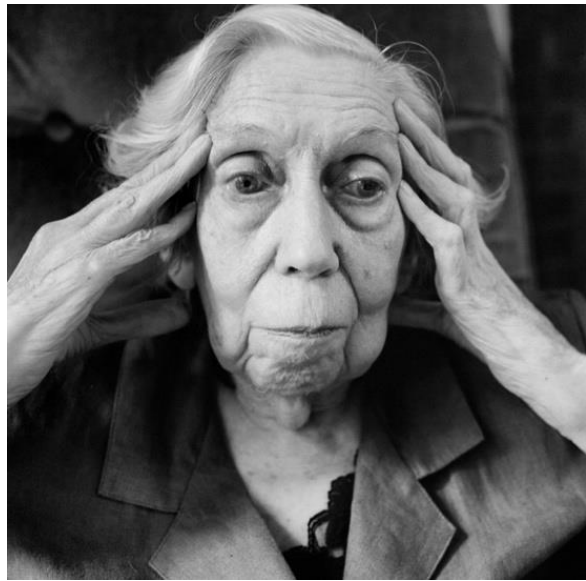
petals of love  
float all around  
the air like honeybees  
to a melon

Crocheted blankets and mittens  
Easter baskets filled to the brim  
eager faces awaiting apple pie  
alamode for some

Walls and walls  
of memories with crayons  
and fingerpaints. Baby pictures  
scattered through my home.

Church pews and prayers  
matching hats, purses, shoes  
and yes, even dresses  
for Sunday services

Stories and gifts that Mom  
won't buy but I will



for I envy all and my  
love that I spread  
to each and everyone

Countless cookies and glasses  
of milk, plates of PBJ sandwiches  
and chocolate cupcakes  
I lovingly supplied.  
Tables and tables  
of food I have  
set and plated  
before you all  
holidays and non-holidays.

All of Nana's love  
shall flow like the river  
Nile for centuries  
to come and beyond.

I will not be forgotten  
but remembered and cherished  
like a porcelain doll sitting  
on your shelf and within  
your heart forever

## Epistolary Poem

By Candace

My loving, Heavenly Merciful Father,

Sitting and reflecting  
Surrounded by your beautiful creations

A heart full of gratitude  
Nourished by your love and light

Patiently you waited so so long  
Longing for me to open my mind and heart

Finally, I returned to you, lost and broken  
You have taught me what love really is

Feeling your transforming love working  
Molding me into who you created me to be

I am your uniquely made, loved child  
To love you, serve you, love others, serve others

Thank you for blessing me with each day  
I love you and thank you for loving me

Your Loving Faithful child



## Home

By Mary

If you are the architectural beauty  
I am the eyes of wonder  
If you are the light that illuminates  
I am basking in the glow  
If you are the arches and columns  
I am the hands that touch  
If you are the road to heaven  
I am running to your gates  
If you are the carvings of time  
I am with you all the way  
If you are in the shadows  
I am the light that guides  
If you are the floor of concrete  
I am the feet that explore  
If you are all imagination  
I am the mind that hungers  
If you are a pristine temple  
I am here to worship  
If you are to be part of history  
I am sharing your future  
If you are the shape of elegance  
I am wearing your praise  
If you are full of laughter  
I am smothering the tears  
If you are part of this world  
I am the eyes of wonder



## Wind Chimes

By Yarenis

If you are the shine of the moon through the window  
I am the lady waiting at home.

If you are the noisy city street,  
I am the gaze upon the blacktop.

If you are the flip of a store closed sign  
I am the lift of a man's trench in the night's wind.

If you are the strike of car tops in sudden rain,  
I am the pop of an umbrella opening.

If you are the rattling cut of silence from the backroom,  
I am the clutch of a baby blue rattle.

If you are the pace of soft footsteps toward the crib,  
I am the rise of baby Solo's gaze.

If you are the kiss between the baby's eyes,  
I am the gratitude in his smile.

If you are the jingling in her bracelet,  
I am the drift into a dream of a child.

If you are the dribble on his bottom lip,  
I am the admiration of a mother.

If you are the ring of the telephone,  
I am the anticipation of a sister's voice.

If you are the sink of a booty into the cushion of a chair,  
I am the press of feet bottoms on the edge of a counter.

If you are the sass given to the late caller,  
I am the giggle on the other end.

If you are the current through brainwaves,  
I am the scribble of notes in a pad.

If you are the softening of nail tissue in saliva,  
I am the thoughtful nerves that bite off the flesh.

If you are the "Be there or be square" on the other end,  
I am the "Either way, I'm edgy" on this end.

If you are the fumbling with keys out by the elevator,  
I am the anticipatory slam of the telephone receiver.

If you are the slam shut of the front door,  
I am the shot out of the barrel of eyes in his direction.



If you are the drip of rain down his temple,  
I am the smirk of a man bearing gifts.

If you are the place on the counter of food and wine,  
I am the shrug off of a Moncler.

If you are the "The day was long,"  
I am the "Well, I'm glad you're here now."

If you are the satin touch of his hand 'round her wrist,  
I am the soft whisper in her ear.

If you are slightly sped up heart beats in her chest,  
I am the sit up straight in her chair.

If you are the stride over to the cabinet,  
I am the pour of two glasses of red wine.

If you are the clasp of a gold chain 'round her ankle,  
I am the loose sarong 'round her waist.

If you are the planted kiss on her lips,  
I am the startled at his swift movements.

If you are the won't waste an enriching encounter,  
I am the graphic words saying how it all feels.

If you are the release of the most primal of natures,  
I am the absence of time existing.

If you are the delicate lift of her arms over her head,  
I am the fingered outline of the height of her thigh.

If you are the graze of an exploring mouth,  
I am the press of tender lips.

If you are the look into her eyes as he enters,  
I am the sound of the catch of her breath.

If you are the roar of a space shuttle taking flight,  
I am the deep sink into a puffy white cloud.

If you are the feeling of morphine,  
I am the one he calls his heroin(e).

If you are the choir of angels with golden halos,  
I am the ready to die in his arms.

If you are the straddled tree log keeping her afloat,  
I am the one drowning in euphoria.

If you are the compass pointed in the right direction,  
I am the flip of an electric light switch.

If you are the beat of heat from the sun,  
I am the crash of ocean waves on smooth rocks.

If you are an exhilarated climber at the mountain peak,  
I am the yell at rescue boats from a watchtower.

If you are the record player in rhythmic sync,  
I am the train coming on time.

If you are the blare of an incessant telephone,  
I am the snapback into reality.

If you are the reluctant answer of the telephone,  
I am the "Alright, alright, I'll be right there."

If you are the visual consumption of her bareness,  
I am the "They need you right now?"

If you are the "Yea Babe, I gotta go,"  
I am the "Wake me when you get back."

If you are two kisses upon her eyelids,  
I am the scramble to put on clothes.

If you are the soft tap of a spilled glass of wine,  
I am the soak of crimson in the carpet.

If you are the show of pouty lips,  
I am two wide eyes taking all of him in.

If you are the curl of black hair 'round her finger,  
I am the last peck upon her forehead.

If you are gone like the wind out the front door,  
I am the sound of wind chimes on the balcony.



**My Dear Friend**

By Brenda

Writing to let you  
Know how I am

My parents sent me  
To marry this horrible man

His mother has me  
Wearing big blue roosters

This dress is ugly  
Just my luck

Sitting here in  
Red rooster room

Staring out the window  
Looking for an escape

Without anyone noticing  
Wish me luck  
On my escape

See you soon  
Brenda



## **Inspired: Andre Leon Talley**

By Jacqueline

Now I imagine that I was next  
to take a photo at this location in Paris

I am wearing a ladies tux made  
with a skirt. Black linen, white blouse  
satin cummerbund around my waist  
Black silk stockings – same as your shoes!

Draped in the same cape!  
But me, oh me, I cannot keep  
A straight face  
I am smiling

Arms spread wide, staring past the camera  
Welcoming the world at large

Imagine me standing there in the evening air  
With a smile that shares  
Happiness, glee. Feel with me the awe  
Of being free.  
Caped in emporium, elegance!  
This moment has lasting effects  
Imagine and breathe  
For all the world to see.



## **Extending the Metaphor**

By Jacqueline

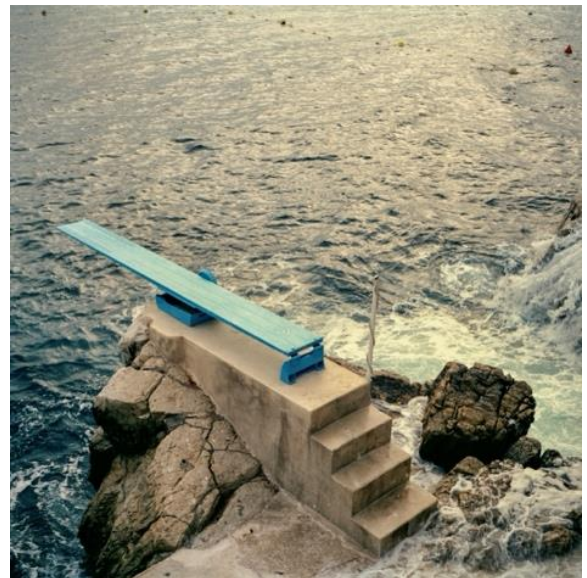
A diving board is the tool that frees  
And then allows all of life's possibilities

And glides you to greater heights & depths  
And keeps you rising high

The water stimulates the body  
It conducts your ability to be free

I acknowledge its hold on me  
Wherever I am: I am free

The action taken is real  
The act of flying off the diving board  
Exemplifies my existence



## **Majestic**

By Jacqueline

If you are graced with contentment  
I am the channel of wonder

If you are elegant  
I am the settled-in-a-mess

If you are admired like the gems you wear  
I am the naked body (rack)

If you are surrounded by rich art  
I am the hands that strike

If you are sustained by rich tapestry  
I am the admired beam

If you are the evening bliss  
I am the channel of wonder



## **Wow, Dear Daughter**

By Jacqueline

Do you remember your visit  
To the Vatican? It was 1995  
You were four years old.  
I've found a photo of you running  
Toward the light.  
Did you realize you are captured  
As a free spirit. My angel, my star.  
The richness of the hall you are trotting  
Through welcomes you!  
Though your back is facing front in the photo,  
I know you were running in glee.  
Smiling, happy, free.  
That awesome moment is one  
Of many that represents you are destined  
To be pulled into the light!  
The more I look I see the shining light  
As part of you.  
Hey, daughter, maybe it's me you were running to.  
As light surrounds...  
If only we could relive that moment again.



## LINKED RENGA PHOTO POEMS

### **Renga on the Diving Board**

*By Jackie, Jewelz, Lay, Rabbit & Taz*

The ocean should be so blue and light  
but the dark like a cloud when it's going to  
rain to wash every negative away

We take turns approaching this  
blue jump board, jump with much glee

My thoughts bouncing off  
Bending sunlight and the board  
Flow with the ocean

I choose to leap to my death  
A rebirth of another life

As I dive into this water  
It makes me feel like the life  
I've dived into

This reminds me of the  
cold world we all live in

Every wave reminding me of  
the different ways of life

While the water flows against my face  
I can feel the grave of the waves

Hugging my body  
as if I was being embraced

As the ocean sounds calm  
and the waters hit the rocks  
I know it's hope on the other side

Let's enjoy this board  
Now feel refreshed and oh  
so blessed

What a wonder test

Mesmerized by waves  
death is calling me tonight  
the rhythm beats steadily

Professional diver, no  
Bravery, here goes nothin'



## **Renga on a Stressed Woman**

*By Brenda, Candace, Cindy, Mary & Tina*

Trapped inside my head  
Who? What? When? Where? How? Why? Why?  
Determined to find

Thoughts running crazy  
so much is going on

I'm trying to think  
But I'm not thinking  
Entering an empty mind

Hoping to find my freedom  
Within this darkened vessel

Grasping my inner listening  
Glancing into my past seeing  
The future ahead

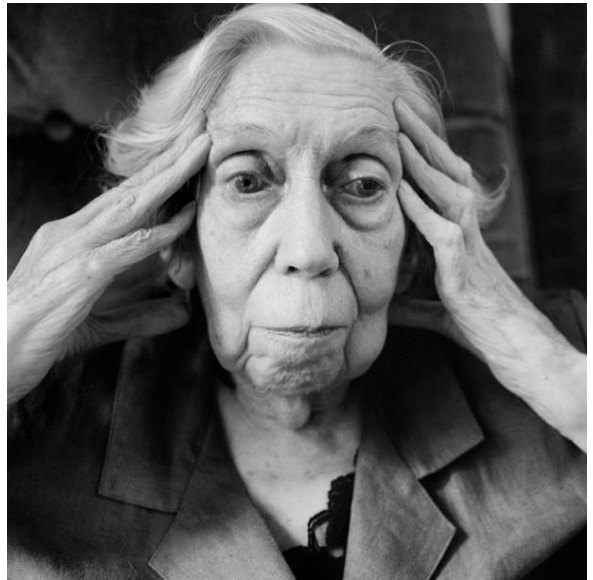
Aggravated, need to relax  
Be still, breath, find inner peace

Why do I feel ill  
Where is my mind going now  
Someone help me quick

My mind is a mess  
Trying to organize thoughts

Thoughts sprinkled across  
This lush colorful landscape  
Mind forever races

Blessings intertwine my soul  
My heart opens up like a volcano



## **Unfinished Sestina for Andre Leon Talley**

*By Cindy, Tina, Candace, Mary, Schwanika, Yarenis, Alechmarie, Brenda, Jacqueline, & Nadiya*

The sun sets and I enter the night  
Longing to climb to the top of the tower  
The Parisian lights glimmer and glow  
I look regal, my attention commands  
My brilliance is evident, the appeal strong  
As I stand here in all my elegance

The bronze metal sculptures shaped in elegance  
I long to return each night  
Exquisite architecture bold and strong  
Rich culture, screams the Eiffel Tower  
Its rigid presence in command  
As the cattail lights twinkle and glow

My rich complexion, see how it glows  
Embroidered silk radiating elegance  
This fashionista's style is in command  
As if in my pocket I steal the night  
Posing on the bridge, echoing the tower  
Remaining strong



*A selection of additional poems from the RTA/KMA Building Bridges poetry workshop  
Bedford Hills Correctional Facility Fall 2024*

**Color**

By Cindy

That's the tree of life  
With such vibrant shades and hues  
Discover yourself

We wear green, they: Blue  
We are no different from you  
Fabricated tales

Provide truth in here  
Speech indecipherable  
Hypocrisy lasts

Zealous state of mind  
Trivial trust overwhelms  
All of the senses

Life is beautiful  
Yet tastes bitter, hurts the soul  
Divided we are

The labyrinth of life  
The future in jeopardy  
Like a stone unturned

## **Shedding the Mask**

By Candace

Frozen in silence inside the marble  
Mask, body, pose classic yet ancient  
Lithe form appears shy, lacking confidence  
Emotional war being fought is concealed  
Impression of serenity, far from peace  
Shattering expectations, judgements, fears desired

Finding my true inner self desired  
Memories, pain, traumas, part of the marble  
If only I could break free, is there peace  
Discovering the future, the past is ancient  
Coping and managing rather than concealed  
Thawing my numbness, foundation of confidence

Each drop that melts away, I gain confidence  
Wanting to actually live strongly desired  
Existing beyond exhausting, everything concealed  
Piece by piece I break free of the marble  
Oppression, submission, abuse becoming ancient  
Path being laid leading to inner peace

Faith, hope, love entwined with peace  
Belief in myself closer and closer to confidence  
Releasing tainted history, ambiguity now ancient  
Retaining culture, morals, values, ancestry desired  
Feeling, seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting outside the marble  
Perseverance, courage, integrity no longer concealed

Hopes, dreams, goals created not concealed  
Step by step an adventurous journey to peace  
Alleviating old burdens as I shed the marble  
Alive, thriving, invigorated newfound confidence  
Free to be exactly who I want to be desired  
Almost achieved, never returning to ancient

Beauty radiant like the sun, darkness ancient  
Cleansed of shame rather than concealed  
Ability to extend compassion and forgiveness desired  
Forgiving is part of healing and finding peace  
Trust the Lord without doubts only confidence  
Armor of God worn proudly, goodbye mask of marble

Goodbye brokenness, goodbye ancient marble  
Protect, nurture never again concealed confidence  
Promise to cherish forever long desired peace



## Bedford Hills Prison

By Tina

Sunny days where the bees and marigolds  
dance about and among rows  
of tomatoes, eggplants  
various shapes, sizes and colors  
blooming all around this brick  
prison that entraps my body  
but not my mind.

The black and golden puppies  
frolic in the yard like children  
at a playground. Small ones and large  
frolicking as they would in their youth  
Each one setting my heart fluttering  
I fall in love with them all.

It's for my own past I love  
puppies and babies. They make  
me feel alive and human  
not a monster caged up  
from society. These iron bars  
can only take so much of my soul away.

I feel I have freedom within these walls  
that there's hope at the end  
of the tunnel here in this complex  
campground, brick prison, filled  
with rules and orders, confusion  
social outcasts and social cliques.

As I await that sunny, warm glorious  
day when my freedom is real  
and tangible, when I can feel fresh air  
on my skin, when no shackles or mental  
handcuffs touch my person, when  
I am in miles and miles of sweet release

from the hells of prison  
that faithful day when I can embrace my family  
and friends as a free person, no longer held  
in the walls of hell that have held me captive  
like a troll under a bridge, unwanted  
in our society.

## The System

By Tina

Packed suitcases  
Stuffed backpacks filled  
To the brim trash bags  
All of us hustled  
Together packed like  
Sardines into cars  
Shuffled in and out  
Of homes rules by  
Rules change every  
30 days same cycle  
Schools change homes change  
Families change hustled back  
And forth from weekend visits  
With our kin shackled to one  
Another shuffled into  
A center baby prison more  
Rules, strictness, adoptions  
Rejections, fights, gangs, drugs  
Rock and roll, sex, fighting for  
Our freedom punishment  
Comes as we become aware of what we  
Want and who we are  
Pills and needles  
Shoved into our systems  
Of course more rules  
More judgement, more families  
More weekend visits more shortened  
Holidays spent with commercialized  
Cheer, false promises, tears  
Hugs, phony niceness to sooth  
Us a show for the taxpayers  
Plain and simple  
Families strained and in loads  
Of pain almost like sheets of  
Shattered glass  
Tons of knowledge shoved  
Down our throat and drilled  
Into our heads always  
Fueling our anxieties, anger  
Rage, sense of injustice, fudge  
Them all, I say. They bribe us  
And don't think about our emotional  
Turmoil that churns like an ocean  
Non-stop pills, counseling rehabs  
Mental places, jails, even prisons  
Is all we have for answers  
We are fallen angels  
Not from heaven and not from hell  
We are in between some of us  
Walk this path alone over and over again

Always in and out of the system  
A rose growing from a crack  
On a sidewalk near a crack house  
A woman always looking for love  
In all the wrong dugouts, searching through  
Gutters littered with druggies, abusers  
Swines, donkeys, con artists, thy  
Satanic ones attempted as wedded bliss  
Never worked, even attempts at one-night  
Stands and orgies never worked  
Caught up in a player relationship ritual  
Again down the rabbit hole of pure hell for me  
For you see thy has a type that ain't so grand  
At all but thy needs to get away from that type  
For thy own good way too many oceans  
Of tears and blood wasted, splattered shed  
Over some foolish man or wanna be man  
Locked up in the nut house floors and rehabs  
Over emotional oceans that went up and down  
Like a hurricane with not a damn soul  
Who gave a damn if I lived or died  
Nonstop handcuff leg shackles  
Pass around the pills, weed, spinning  
Of the bottle, playing truth or dare  
Stealing, lying cheating smoking in  
The boys' bedroom, car, trucks  
Make out sessions on buses  
Or couches or whatever whenever  
The urge came about  
Having babies men drugs selling  
My body soul mind just to be a parent  
Wife daughter sister even human  
Barrooms, jail cells, motorcycle clubs  
Gangs, tattoos, weapons, violence, tears  
Of pure pain, frustration, DSS CPS  
More rules more drama more classes  
Constant balancing seesaw action  
More pills more words emotional  
Exchanges trauma pure hellish pain  
That keeps opening revolving  
Like a stripper on a pole.  
Bruises, broken bones, gun wounds,  
Knife wounds physical and emotional  
And mental scars inside and out  
My rose blooms inside and out with thorns  
Through the cracks deeply hidden  
Women, couples, more pain each  
Relationship leaves me more shattered  
Than the last but I don't show it  
I move smooth as ice into my next  
Layer or realm of hell each  
Layer of happiness is short-lived  
But remains somewhere deep within me

Still to this day.  
Knives and guns call upon me  
As blood spills from my veins but I feel  
No pain I only cut to stop all this  
Goddam pain

I long to feel that sweet freedom and the sun  
on my pale face, and feel my soul  
arise from under the bridge

## **You Don't Know Me**

By Mary

The person you see  
You don't know  
I've had to hide  
Behind 1,000 masks

If I show you who I am  
You may not like who you see  
The person I am  
Is Bold as Brass

I'm sassy, outspoken  
Sometimes an asshole  
I'm sweet and kind  
Have compassion for others

I'm fearless, scared of no one  
But God  
I can also be as fragile as glass  
Like a little baby rose

But, still you  
Don't know me

I'm kind  
But cruel  
Like a shooting star  
That can convince any fool

I extend my hand to help  
1,000 friends  
But none prevail  
Over God's hand

Tolerance in none  
Ignorance is bliss  
Desire for power  
From these shackles on my wrists

But, still you  
Don't know me

What conflicts life causes  
Cultured threats  
No compromises  
Prejudices exist

There are challenges  
To value  
And opportunities  
You can't miss

So, no you  
Don't know me

I've been betrayed  
More times than I can count  
But still find  
It hard to say No

I've been rich, I've been poor  
And I've been homeless  
I've had everything and nothing  
Yet, I'm still selfless

I'm loyal, trustworthy  
Would be your ride or die  
Let me introduce myself  
I'm me, Mary, nice to meet you

STILL YOU DON'T KNOW ME

## **I Wear 1,000 Masks**

By Mary

Here in this place  
I dwell

I wear an ever  
Changing mask

To hide the pain, hurt,  
And depression with sadness from my past

I have stuffed it deep inside  
Deeper it dwells within

When I try not to  
Wear a mask

I get burned  
The pain is unbearable

I ask myself why?  
Why? Do I even try?

Now, I have found  
New hope

My identity, Mary, me,  
As BOLD AS BRASS

I won't have to  
Wear 1,000 masks  
I wear no more masks.

**The Earth**  
By Yarenis

The woman who falls in line  
With the Sun to produce life  
Is the Earth.  
Her mind is fertile enough.  
When the Sun implants seeds into it,  
They survive, develop, and mature.  
The Earth reflects the Sun.  
Her rich soil is a womb  
That incubates.  
The seeds implanted in it spark alive  
And turn into seedlings.  
The Earth's soul is sea deep and endless  
Having such creative kindness,  
Eyeballs in tear heavy sockets  
Often gaze  
As if at a mid-day,  
Diamond sparkle, ocean scenery.  
She glows  
As the salt preserved,  
Deep sea creatures glow:  
Having the brightest smile.  
Her brightest ideas,  
Sea deep  
Awaiting the perfect moment to surface.  
She is the rarest,  
Most exotic creature found  
On the island of Madagascar.  
Although her spirit is wild,  
She is Sun tamed performing sacred rituals  
Intuitively falling in line with the Sun.  
The Sun wraps his arms around  
And protects her  
Along with life they bring forth  
Together.  
He is a conscientious guide nearby  
Always observing and burning  
As constant as solar storms.  
The Sun kisses and blesses the Earth.  
There is plenty of life in her.  
Life sustaining vegetation  
Produce full harvests  
And enjoyment.  
Sink teeth into  
And wrap lips around  
A global-variety of fruit.  
Sweet juices  
That soak into the tongue.  
Soak into the heart.  
Seep into the mind.  
She looks the flyest

With the most diverse,  
Bird soaring skies.  
Clearly, beautiful.  
An exceptional view  
Accented by white clouds.  
She is open-minded and airy.  
Mood changing seasons  
Offer experience.  
Mature insight  
On death and life.  
Although she is war impacted  
With blood-stained soil,  
She is deeply rooted and grounded  
Unlike the woman who cannot  
Fall in line with the Sun to produce life.  
This woman's mind is infertile.  
If the Sun were to implant a seed,  
It would not survive,  
Let alone develop or mature.  
She is unlikely to dismiss the seed altogether.  
This planet does not reflect the Sun.  
The land is more barren  
Than the Earth's deserts.  
The materials on this planet  
Struggle in vain  
Producing violent environments  
And miserable conditions  
That cannot sustain life.  
As if grief-stricken,  
The infertile ground  
Leaves the planet frowning,  
Envious of the Earth.  
Too preoccupied  
With wanting to be the Sun  
To move in an earthly direction,  
Life visiting this uninhabitable planet  
For any extended period of time,  
Will surely die.  
The Sun does not do much  
For this planet.  
Any other planet  
In the Milky Way Galaxy  
Is most certainly  
Not the Earth.  
The Earth has been asteroid slighted,  
Meteorite beaten,  
Trampled under stampedes  
And carved into.  
Life drinks Earth's dropped tears  
And shifts through wisdom rich soil.  
Although raped of her natural resources,  
As if unscathed,

She never ceases  
To nurture offering an abundance.  
Pray in her mountains.  
Eat of the land.  
Sing in her valleys.  
Heal from the herbs.  
Breathe her in.  
She has a lush forest  
Head of hair  
With puffs that create  
A shade covering to rest under.  
Drift asleep  
On a cozy bosom bush.  
Listen to her sing  
In the clear sound, soothing trickle  
Of a cold-water stream.  
Wake up in a botanical wonderland.  
Let her mate sun shower kisses  
That drop upon bare skin.  
Let the heart flutter  
As a butterfly passes overhead.  
Take in the breezes  
As cool advice.  
Nickname her Serenity  
Fully aware  
That she will remain in line with  
And reflect the Sun  
For eternity.

## **You're My Friend**

By Brenda

When you are sad  
I will dry your tears.  
When you are scared,  
I will comfort your fears.

When you are worried  
I will give you hope  
When you are confused  
I will help you cope.

When you are lost  
And can't see the light  
I shall be your beacon  
Shining ever so bright

This is my oath  
I pledge till the end  
Why you may ask  
Because you are my friend

And you are my angel my Princess  
My only one

## **Great Worldly Views**

By Brenda

Fresh brisk  
Air

Beautiful beaches  
So serene

Trees in park  
Spot new life

Long red  
Brick lanes

Where they  
Lead

Creepy caterpillars  
On branch

Forming beautiful  
Butterflies

True outdoors  
Scary, serene

They warn of  
Beastly world

Willing to take  
That chance

Monstrous mountains  
Real mystery

Mysterious buildings  
What's dwelling

Beast, Prince  
Beastly Prince

Menacing maybe  
Mystical

**Image credits:**

Jonathan Becker, *The Duchess of Alba at home, Seville, 2010*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

58 x 58 inches

Jonathan Becker, *At the Eden Roc, Cap d'Antibes, France, 2008*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

44 x 44 inches

Jonathan Becker, *Eudora Welty at home, Jackson, Mississippi, 1994*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

58 x 58 inches

Jonathan Becker, *Millicent Fenwick at home, Bernardsville, New Jersey 1990*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

44 x 44 inches

Jonathan Becker, *Sebastian Becker, St. Peter's Basilica, The Vatican, 1995*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

58 x 58 inches

Jonathan Becker, *Diane von Furstenberg at home, Cloudwalk, Connecticut, 1981*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

28 x 28 inches

Jonathan Becker, *Patricia Herrera at home, New York, 2001*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

28 x 28 inches

Jonathan Becker, *André Leon Talley, Chevalier d l'Ordre des arts et des lettres, on the Pont Alexandre III, Paris, 30 June 2013, 2013*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

44 x 44 inches

Jonathan Becker, *At the Eden Roc, Cap d'Antibes, France, 2008*

Archival pigment on rag

Courtesy of the artist

44 x 44 inches