MY LIFE, MY LIFE, MY LIFE
BEHIND THESE SOLID DOORS
THINGS WILL NOT CHANGE
IT'S A REVOLVING DOOR
DON'T KNOW WHY I PUT MYSELF THROUGH THIS
WHEN I ALREADY KNOW WHATS IN STORE
I HAVE TO PUT THE PAIN AND GRIEF BEHIND ME
ALONG WITH ALL THE OTHER THINGS I ENDURED BEFORE
IT'S TIME TO TAKE SOME STRIDES
TOWARDS A BETTER LIFE
I WANT A LOT OF THINGS AND MORE
BUT HERES TWO THAT I WOULD ADORE
I IMAGINE A BEAUTIFUL WIFE
AND LIVING WITH NO STRIFE
MY LIFE, MY LIFE, MY LIFE

THE INMATE HANDBOOK

A collection of works by the incarcerated students of Literal Change

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ALL WORKS ARE USED BY LITERAL CHANGE WITH THE CONSENT OF THE ARTISTS

ALL WORKS ARE PROHIBITED FROM BEING SOLD FOR PROFIT

MORE ART @LITERALCHANGE

THE SUN BEATS DOWN.
THE IRON FENCE WILL OPEN.

- INMATE 070-

I Be Dreaming, Dreaming
About Starting My Life From Scratch
Pushing These Demons Off My Back
Got This Woman By My Side
Better Believe She's Down To Ride
I Be Dreaming, We Be Dreaming
Nothing Can Come Between Us
We're A Team
Me And My Baby
Along With A Few People
That I Met On My Journeys As A Teen
Who Continue To Hold Me Down
And Haven't Left The Scene
I Be Dreaming, I Be Dreaming, I Be Dreaming
I'm Not Going To Stop
The Sky Is The Fucking Limit
Never Will I Turn Back
FUCK Jail
I Am Not Going Back

I feel so smart now, but what was i doing making stupid mistakes.

- Inmate 070-

I KNOW THERE'S SOMETHING POSITIVE FOR ME OUT THERE. AND I FEEL MYSELF GOING THAT WAY.

- INMATE 550-

AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Literal Change is a Canadian charity that was started by two women who saw a need for literacy education in our prison system.

At Literal Change, we believe that literacy is a right - not a privilege. And so we run remedial literacy programs for those who have had few reasons to enjoy school in the past.

Through our programs, we've witnessed many talented folks who use the little that is available on "the inside" to keep expressing themselves.

All of the works pictured here are original and anonymous. Our students had generously consented to having them displayed and shared with the world. You can see more on our Instagram @LiteralChange

Shakin It (verb)

To feel anxious and stressed about one's situation, life, future, etc.

-Inmate Handbook-

I REMEMBER THIS QUOTE I READ FROM LEO TOLSTOY. HE SAID THAT, "IN ORDER TO BE A WRITER YOU HAVE TO SURVIVE WAR AND PRISON."

- INMATE 220-

Dear sin,
I'm coming out for you tonight,
time to rid all
these temptations.
you used to ruin my life.
dear sin,
I'm coming out for YOU tonight.

- Inmate 780-

Touch Road (verb)

To get released

-Inmate Handbook-

It went from the year of the drugs, to the year of the gun, and now it's the year of the pimp.

- Inmate 210-

Sit around here talkin badman tings wit badman, what do you think is gonna happen?

-Inmate 056-

I could see
them looking,
not at me,
but through my own eyes.
yes, blind men can see.
through the mind's eye,
in another place.

-inmate 016-

I believe these walls have ears,
they could even hear me thinking...

- Inmate 016-

DEEP MEDITATION TO
NOT BECOME INSANE...

-INMATE 016-

THE MEMORY
OF THE PAST SEEMS
TO VANISH IN THIS PLACE

-INMATE 020-

It's like a bad dream...

-inmate 075-

my anxiety
was so bad i
wasn't able to
go to school.

-inmate 020-

I DID GOOD AS A KID,
BUT I WAS IN SURVIVAL MODE.

-INMATE 075-

I've always wondered
what things would
be like if
everything
i've done in
my life i'd done
differently.

-inmate 006-

when you drink it makes you feel
like everything is perfect
when in reality it's not.

-inmate 075-

Whenever I let
you become part
of me,
you overtook
me.

-inmate 211-

IN MY WORDS,
YOU NEVER HEARD
MY HEART.
YOU BROKE ME DOWN,
YOU TORE ME APART.

-INMATE 203-

daddy used to hit me till i started
hittin' back
left with nothin' but a sack to meet
the lonely world alone

-inmate r-

Therefore,
the dimension
of time is
no longer
understood to
the simple
mind...

-inmate 016-

my soul is tearing
up,
the burden causes me
to fall.

-inmate 564-

take me back
to a better place...

-inmate 099-

Story Up (verb)

You don't have to lie

-Inmate Handbook-

IN MY ENVIRONMENT, IT'S THE DRUG DEALERS WHO PEOPLE LOOK UP TO

-INMATE 011-

I'm 22 years old and I've been to 14 funerals.

-inmate 550-