

# COLLEGE GUILD

Spring 2018 Newsletter

*This newsletter is dedicated in memory of Carolyn Harrington*

**RESPECT  
REDUCES  
RECIDIVISM**

## YOU HAVE A DATE!

By Yassin A.

Before my trial, I was very positive. The justice will prevail, the truth will come out, the court will prove my innocence and I will go home. Even my lawyer told me many times: "You are going home, they have nothing against you." Indeed, when I wanted him to ask me some more questions when I was on the witness stand, he replied, "We don't have to do anything because they have proven nothing against you. There is no way for this jury to find you guilty."

After the guilty verdict and my sentencing for fifteen years, I really believed that appeals court would correct this mistake and give me back my freedom. Then I lost my appeal and, to be honest, with it I lost my faith in the system to be fair to a foreigner, especially a bearded Muslim man, in the post-9/11 tragedy climate.

All these courts' denials made me very special for the BOP. They always treated me as though I am the most dangerous and the worst criminal in the system. Indeed, in all my transfers, they always put me in the "black box" and separated me from the general population of inmates, isolated me with the murderers on death row or high security people.

One time, during the transfer, they brought 2 other people in black boxes. One sat with me and another sat behind me. Of course I was quiet, disappointed, sad, not sure this was reality or just a dream. After a while the one prisoner who sat next to me asked:

"Are you OK?"

"Thank you, I'm fine."

"You look sad."

"Of course I'm sad. They gave me fifteen years."

"Are you kidding?" he said laughingly.

"No, I'm not."

"Fifteen years?!" He seemed surprised.

"Yes."

"So you'll go home soon." He smiled.

"No, I'm not. My release date is 2018."

"So you have only 8 or 9 years left. Why are you in

the black box?"

"Just like you."

"But I have 2!"

"2 Years?!" I asked surprisingly.

"No, two lifes!"

"What does that mean?"

"They gave me two lifes plus 35 years."

"I don't understand."

"My sentencing was for two lifetimes plus 35 years. I have been in for 27 years."

"You did 27 years in prison?"

"Yes, I wish I had a date like you do."

"Which date?"

"The release date. You have a date. You look forward to get out, but I'm not."

"But that date will be in 2018."

"Oh, it's just around the corner. It'll come much faster than you think."

While I never wanted misfortune to befall another human being, and we should never wish that, yet when we meet people whose situation is worse and their pain is more severe, then we realize ours is not the worst, and somehow we gain some strength to live and endure our pains.

Since my conversation with that person, I have always looked forward and counted years to reach 2018. Guess what? He was right! It came faster than I could have imagined. Indeed, it was quite difficult and painful. Sometimes I doubted that I would ever make it, but now it is almost over.

I can't believe I am almost 48 years old and I have spent so many years in prison. But it's over! Now I am done counting years and I am only counting months.

I would like to thank you all for your letters, prayers and support. They made a big difference for me and my family, and they made this trial a lot easier for us. I will never forget your kindness and will always remain grateful to you all for the rest of my life.

## Welcome to Nat Shed, College Guild's New Interim Executive Director

In early January I was hired as Interim Executive Director. It has been a pleasure and a great source of excitement to see how effectively this largely volunteer organization works. College Guild offers so many interesting courses to hundreds of incarcerated men and women in all fifty states and Puerto Rico! As I learn more about College Guild, I see my role as a bridge to help move it from the current leadership structure based on the marvelous, insightful founding vision of Julie Zimmerman to a new model with a paid professional Executive Director. It is a real honor for me to play a small but important role during this transition.

Over the next few months we plan to develop a comprehensive strategic vision and to define the roles of each member of the Board of Directors with an expanded use of committees. On the more practical side of non-profit management, the College Guild donor records and fundraising plans will undergo a complete renovation. We have already made important changes in setting up a new financial reporting system and implementing a new budgeting approach that gives the staff and Board of Directors a clearer picture of the Guild's financial outlook. The most important task during my six months as your Interim Executive Director will be to assist the Board of Directors in hiring an effective long-term Executive Director.

To facilitate this transition in a way that honors Julie Zimmerman's seventeen years as founder and volunteer leader will require ongoing care and support from readers, donors and staff. We wish to ensure that Julie's thoughtful approach and her genuine connection is maintained with each of our students and with all of our volunteer readers.

The major hurdle faced by the College Guild over the next few months is the cost incurred by hiring an Executive Director. We are confident that supporters, knowing the value and importance of College Guild courses to over 500 students, will help bridge this financial gap.

My thanks for your time and thoughtfulness to all of the College Guild office volunteers and to each and every volunteer reader. I would like to know your thoughts on this transition and suggestions concerning ways to make College Guild more effective in living out its mission. I can be reached at [execdircollegeguild@gmail.com](mailto:execdircollegeguild@gmail.com).



## Carolyn Harrington

1931—2018

*Carrie, as she was known to her students, was a reader for the Short Story Club but she didn't just provide constructive criticism and encouragement. As one of her students, Ignacio, wrote: "You give us something more valuable than gold: you give us hope." Carolyn inspired all of us at College Guild with her generous financial support and her capacity to care so deeply for those in need of education and respect.*



Horace B.

### *Donations have been made in memory of:*

Barbara Cady	Fritz Kempner
Marjorie Holland	Susie Moran
Alex Severance	June Snow
Lucille Hornbeck	Perry Jordan
Clem and Kathie Biddle	Carolyn Harrington

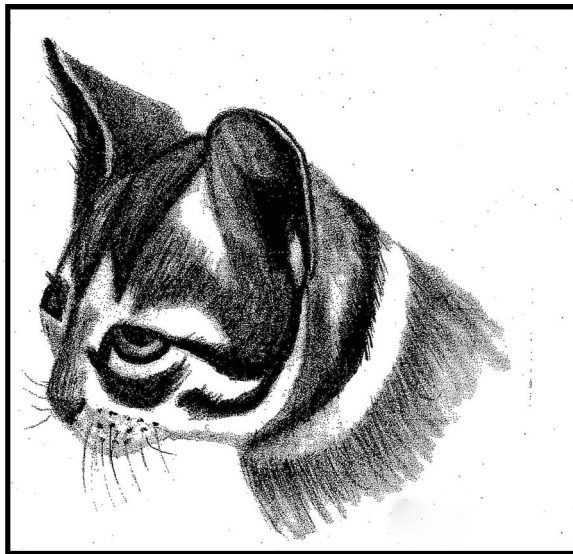
### *Donations have been made in honor of:*

Barbara Y.	Julie Z.
Tracey M.	Beth M.
Patty R.	Sally W.
Tricia W.	Peggy L.
Ellen Z.	Meg B.

Old pylons dot the river's edge  
 looking like broken teeth  
 protruding from muddy gums beneath.

Green moss covers these remnants  
 of a pier long gone  
 useless, but still holding on.

The current meanders among the tule plants  
 decaying stumps from time gone by  
 standing sentinel nearby. Gabriel R.



David S.

### MY GREATEST ADVENTURE

A VENDING MACHINE  
 BESIDE A SPILLED PEPSI CAN  
 SPENDING MY DAYS NOTICING MUNDANE THINGS

MY GREATEST ADVENTURE  
 TO FIND A LIGHT FILLED WITH DEAD BUGS  
 THE COUNTING OF WHICH CAN BURN AWAY  
 A LITTLE TIME GABRIEL R.

### Depiction

*If I could illustrate my life*

*...eyes would be the brush*

*...gaze the paint*

*...moods and emotion vibrant colors.*

*What I can't figure out*

*...would it be a portrait*

*...a collage of abstract nature*

*...or a landscape of my sanctuary?*

*Can it be envisioned*

*...sprawled across a canvas*

*...flowing over a rock*

*...maybe brightening the bars*

*of my cage enclosing sanity and insanity the same.*

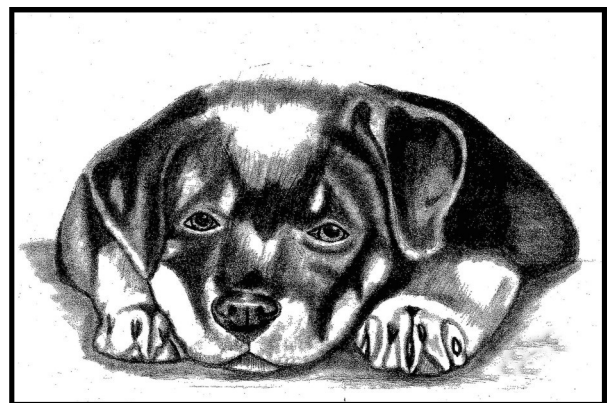
*Derek L.*

### Nerudian Muse

Her gravitational force bends space and  
 curves time into this kaleidoscope  
 jumble of pineapple upside-down cake smiles,  
 and irregular strawberry heart ba-  
 dum paradigms, and zippity do-dah  
 blue sky chips, and banana nut pancake  
 mmm's, and her pretty in pink-seal with a kiss-  
 lips send me tumbling like a gymnast,  
 and she wraps me in these I am her sunshine  
 hug-squeezes that are warm and smitten laced,  
 and her freshly baked bearclaw aroma  
 seduces me beyond infinity...

and chocolate covered memories merge  
 our cotton candy tomorrows today.

Ray R.



David S.

After reading Mary Oliver's poem, "Franz Marc's Blue Horses", Poetry Club students are asked to write a poem about stepping into a painting, either real or imagined. William's and Trayzon's poems are the result of this challenge.

*I step into the painting and immediately  
I feel weightless.*

*The sky is so vivid and clear  
and there in the distance  
is the moon, almost so close  
I can touch it.*

*Wait. There is a ladder.*

*I touch it and it's steady,  
like it's made just for me  
to climb to the moon.*

*So step by step I climb.*

*It's so cold now and hard to breathe,  
but could it really be this easy  
to touch the moon?*

*Almost there,*

*I'm reaching out now...*

*William G.*

*My fingers brushed  
against oil on canvas --  
a popcorn machine  
on a deserted ranch  
full of freshly popped kernels  
pressing against the warm  
sun-borne glass.*

*I pressed and  
the painting gave way.*

*Entered I into the  
buttery world of  
fluffy delight,  
battered lips,  
slightly salted fingertips.*

*I tossed handfuls  
skyward and swear  
the sun smiled  
as a majestic raven  
in its descending glide  
had its fill.*

*Trayzon G.*



Artist: Matt Matteo

Frontiers of Justice, Vol. 3: The Crime Zone ©2000

## OUR MISSION

*To stimulate in prisoners an interest in life long learning  
by providing a selection of free correspondence courses.*

## Please Make a Generous Donation to College Guild Today!

PO Box 6448, Brunswick, ME 04011 You are welcome to click the PayPal Donation link on our website, [www.collegeguild.org](http://www.collegeguild.org).

- My donation of \$2,500 or more supports the Founders Fund.
- My donation of \$1,000 supports College Guild at a Leadership level.
- My donation of \$780 supports new course development.
- My donation of \$360 provides a month's worth of postage.
- My donation of \$240 enables one prisoner to participate in courses for one year.
- My donation of \$120 covers the cost of two courses.
- My donation of \$60 covers the cost of one course.
- My donation of \$25 provides free dictionaries to two prisoners.

Please consider making a recurring monthly/quarterly payment to College Guild of: \$10, \$20, \$40 or \$60.  
Contact us at: [collegeguild@gmail.com](mailto:collegeguild@gmail.com).

Name (s):

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Address:

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City / State:

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Phone:

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E-mail:

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Please send me information about becoming a volunteer reader of student course work.

*Many thanks on behalf of College Guild volunteers  
and incarcerated students for your generous tax-  
deductible donation!*