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Contributors - Mend, v2

Mend Mend

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CONTRIBUTORS

Below are brief bios of those authors whose work appears in this issue. See info on our artists on page 72.

Jennifer Battles has served nine-plus years of a twenty-five-year sentence in Alabama. She works in the facility as a GED tutor and spends her spare time reading, mostly folklore and science fiction but also anything that catches her interest. She believes that the Alabama prison system does not value rehabilitation, only warehousing as many people as possible.

Albert Bell is a 55-year-old Oakland, California native and a published author and poet. Some of his work has been included in *Iron City Magazine* Issue 6 (2021), *Journal X* (2022), and *Colossus: Freedom* (2022). He is a lover of justice, truth, the arts, and God. He is also a lead/bass guitarist for the band Blackberry Jam based at Mule Creek State Prison.

Nathan Blalock is a writer who has published essays and poems. He is currently working on a book of urban sci-fi. His scribblings in sci-fi and other genres can be read in *Inner City*, *Colossus Press*, *Journal X*, *Essential Voices*, and *Nova Albion*.

Leo Cardez (a pseudonym) is a two-time PEN America award-winning and Pushcart Press Prize-nominated writer. His drama has been produced in New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago. Cardez's nonfiction has been published in *The Harbinger* (*NYU Review of Law and Social Justice*), *The Abolitionist*, *Trajectory*, *Evening Review*, and *Under the Sun*, among others.

Michael Crawford served twenty years in prison before being granted clemency in 2019. During that time, he obtained an AA, a BA, and a master's degree. He writes and speaks to youth in an effort to help them avoid prison. He is currently working as a client advocate at the Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.

Curtis R. Dickson has been writing poems for over twenty years. He writes, "Writing is a passion, and I love to write love poems. My goal is to write a book focused on love. I'm also a writer of various genres including fantasy and supernatural scrolls. It is a joy providing for all."

Craig Elias hails from the cake-eating suburbs of Pittsburgh, PA. Alone in a cell in 2002, Craig began taking life, faith, and family seriously. Locked in the hole under investigation in 2008, he began taking writing seriously, too. Since then he's killed trees by the acre, creating essays, short stories, plays, and legal briefs. Craig will tell you that the most important thing he's ever written, however, is his own epitaph: *Jesus of Nazareth lived and loved through Craig Elias*. More than any other, this statement reflects who he is, what he stands for, and what drives him to make every word count regardless of where he writes it.

Gary K. Farlow holds a Juris Doctorate from the Thomas Jefferson College of Law at Head University. He is a two-time winner of the PEN America Writing Award and has had his work featured in numerous publications.

Heather C. Jarvis is preparing to reenter society after serving a ten-year prison sentence. She describes herself as a casualty of generational crime and the opiate epidemic. She has been to a lot of places you would never want to go and done a lot of things you would never want to do, but she has one hell of a story. Her nonfiction has appeared on *The Crime Report*, *The Iowa Review* Prison Writing Project, and *The Journal of Women and Criminal Justice*, and she also regularly contributes to the Prison Journalism Project. She studied memoir under Piper Kerman, author of *Orange Is the New Black*. She also has won multiple awards in PEN America's Prison Writing Contest. She graduated from Sinclair College with an associate's degree in Correctional Rehabilitation and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work at The Ohio State University.

Maryana Kayumova identifies as a Russian-speaking New Yorker and Tatar-American. Most of her poems and short essays strive to depict the life of a Tatar female growing up with a split identity in Russia and America. She dreams about a world with 100% humanism and 0% racism.

Lisa Lesyshen came to prison ten years ago as a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the underarms down and with only 40% use of her arms. She never experienced life on the outside as a person in a wheelchair and describes initiation to prison life as a handicapped person as “brutal.” She always chooses the pursuit of truth and tries to offer a panoramic vision of prison for all to see. Her work attempts to flip the narrative that incarcerated people are inarticulate, dumb, and unworthy, seeking to elevate the conversation about incarceration.

Jennifer Martinez is an Afro-Latina writer from New York City. Jennifer writes poetry and creative nonfiction. She is the author of the forthcoming book *Memories, Poems, Prayers: Between Bars and a Brick Wall*. Jennifer is currently working on receiving her undergraduate degree in politics and human rights.

Fernando Rivas Martinez (pen name f.r. martinez) is an award-winning writer and music composer. His poetry and short stories have received recognition from PEN America and American Short Fiction. Prior to incarceration, he was the recipient of two Emmys and one Grammy for musical composition. He was the recipient of the Richard Rodgers Musical Theater Award in 1997. He has also written for The Marshall Project. His poetry appears on the websites Minutes Before Six and Justice Arts Coalition.

Daniel Wright is 30 and is currently incarcerated by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. He strives every day to be better than the day before, pursuing education and fitness.

Brian Warner is a seminary student incarcerated at Mule Creek State Prison in Ione, CA. His most recent poetry appears in *Journal X* and the inmate-produced newspaper *The Mule Creek Post*. Brian's latest chapbook *After Always War—Emmanuel's Repair* was released by Grolier Poetry Book Shop in April 2023.