

24 FOR 2024

Asheville Community Bail Fund
2024-01-01

Noise demonstrations in front of the jail are a New Years Eve tradition. For the past few years, the bail fund has celebrated the new year by trying to bail a bunch of people out. While spending increasingly long amounts of time waiting at the jail, we've witnessed a lot of people being released from the jail at odd hours, in bad weather, and with no support.

So, this year we wanted to try something different: We wanted to try and have people stationed at the jail for 24 hours on January 1st to help out folks who are being released.

We didn't end up with full 24 hour coverage (a few early-morning shifts were missing), but we did have 18 hours of the day covered, and did end up helping out several people!

We left a booklet with blank pages for each hour for the jail support crew to write their thoughts in while they waited at the jail. This zine contains scans of that booklet!

WE'RE ALL DEAD IN HERE

I'm gonna let you in
on a little secret— she grabs my wrist
with the blue plastic band around it,
points to the stamp-sized mugshot, my name
and number in black letters underneath.
See that name on there?

That's who they're charging,
but it's not you. That's an entity, a body—
which really means a corpse—
and you're alive! Her fingers press
into the skin, the blue veins, as if to prove it.

She creates for us these loopholes, tangling legalese
and mysticism into a religion of escape.

It's a name, it's a clause
of some obscure law no one thinks to look at,
it's four hundred years of conspiracy that we can
slip from
unscathed with one simple trick. Fire your lawyer,
she says. He doesn't want you to know
the things I'm telling you.

But after lockdown and lights out
while the officer sits in her little booth downstairs
and someone screams and falls silent, I wonder
if she's right, and we are all dead in here—

if the veil between worlds is mental and plexiglass and
the tangle of names etched on the door is the
 silent work
of ghosts, the way the dead must always leave
their thumbprints on the living.

And yet most of us will return from this—
having traveled through death not as an endpoint but
 a thread
woven beside life with many crossings over.
Remember this, she tells me, passes me handfuls of
 blank paper.

Write it all down, everything that happens here—
for a lawsuit, for a revolution, for the safe
passage of my soul, I don't know,
but I promise her I will.

This poem as well as *Kool-aid Cigarette* (in the back cover) was taken from
The Veil Between Worlds is Plexiglass, a zine containing a collection of
 writing of an incarcerated forest defender.
You can visit <https://defendtheatlantaforest.org/> for more
 information on the Defend the Atlanta Forest movement.

24 for 2024 Community Jail Support Marathon!

The Asheville Community Bail Fund is a volunteer-run project that gets people out of cages year-round. But for the turning of the year we like to do a little extra, finding ways to bail out more people, wrangle additional community support, and generally place focus on how, as the state doubles down on its policies of criminalization and dehumanization, everyday people step in to build systems of resilience and care.

This year we decided to celebrate this tradition by organizing round-the-clock support at the jail, all day for the first day of the year. Volunteers signed up for 2-hour shifts to post up at the Buncombe County Detention Center starting at midnight on NYE through midnight on Jan 1, waiting to greet people being released, to offer them material support and a ride somewhere.

We know waiting around at the jail is boring and depressing, even for just a couple hours. That's kind of the point of jail. Of course, the waiting we do today will be brief compared to the days, weeks, months, and even years the nearly 400 people right above us have spent—have been forced to spend—waiting. For something to happen. For nothing to happen. Alone with their thoughts, or if they're lucky, a book. Waiting to get a visit or a letter. Waiting to hear back from their lawyer. Waiting for meals to arrive that they know will barely be fit for human consumption.

And yet, incarcerated people create so many interesting and beautiful things while waiting. They turn waiting into writing, into art; they turn waiting into a practice, a discipline, into personal growth and transformation. Even on those days when inspiration and motivation appear to be exhausted, when no words or images filter through the pen and even the chatter of the mind seems to dim and flatten, people

in cages turn waiting into surviving—perhaps the greatest creative act of all.

So while you wait here—for something to happen, or, more likely, for nothing to happen—we invite you to take part in this tradition of generative waiting—of leaving a trace.

The following 24 pages (one for each hour of this day) have been left blank for you to fill in with anything you choose: observations, reflections, poetry, drawings, doodles, anything you'd like to leave behind as a record of your waiting here, of your presence in a place that most people simply pretend doesn't exist.

For as long as this place does exist, we will continue to wait for our friends and neighbors to walk through those doors.

But we'll also continue to fight and to build. We won't wait forever.

The following text is a speech someone gave in front of the jail on New Years Eve.

Hey ya'll, thanks for coming out tonight. I'm with the bail fund and I wanted to explain what we do and give you a rundown of what we've seen this year.

In case you don't know what bail is, it's a ransom payment to get someone out of jail who has been charged with a crime. It has nothing to do with "public safety". If the court deems someone to be a public safety risk, they don't have to set bond and can hold them in jail. Bail simply means that people with money can pay to get out of jail before their trial. It creates a two-tiered injustice system that privileges people with money.

Keep in mind that bail is for people who haven't been found guilty of a crime yet. Being held in jail for even just a few days can have significant negative life impacts. Black, latinx, and indigenous people are twice as likely to be stuck in jail for lack of bail money.

Pretrial incarceration increases the chance of conviction & triples sentence length. This is in part because it drives astronomical rates of plea bargaining, 94% of people held in pretrial detention take plea bargains in state courts. People held in jail are often coerced into taking plea bargains, whether or not they are guilty.

So why does this cash bond system exist? Well, it creates a for-profit cash bail industry, which is outlawed in every country except for the US and the Philippines, which also has a lobbying arm. But more importantly, fully getting rid of cash bail would crash the US court system at every level because it wouldn't be able to handle the amount of trials. The court system isn't actually equipped to grant people a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury that we supposedly have a right to.

Community bail funds reject the logic of turning misery into profit and leverage our collective resources to free our neighbors. We pay the total bail to get folks out of pretrial detention and we don't charge a fee. Bail money is returned to the fund if the person goes to court.

Late last year the county implemented a new software system for the jail. Right after that, we saw the amount of time it takes to bond someone out increase drastically. I've had to wait in there 8 hours for someone to get released after paying the bond. Just a few weeks ago I was in there and I waited 5 hours just to talk to the magistrate and ended up leaving because it took so long.

We've also seen an increase in mistakes. It's become routine that after we post bond for someone, we'll get a call back from the magistrate hours later to tell us they messed up and the person we bonded out won't be released.

In one notable case this year, we posted bail for someone and they still weren't released after a couple of days. It turned out one of their bond conditions was an ankle monitor. We figured out that North Carolina had suspended ankle monitors weeks before, so an ankle monitor was never coming. Evidently the county never got the memo.

After a call-in campaign demanding the county drop the ankle monitoring requirement, not only did they drop the requirement for the person we bailed out, but for--I think--twenty-some other people who were in jail because they were waiting on ankle monitors that were never coming.

Despite the mismanagement of this jail, this year we bailed out 31 people, totaling around 40 thousand dollars in ransom payments.

We have also seen a notable ramp-up in the repression of poor people over the past few months. Last year a fascist group called Asheville Coalition for Public Safety formed to advocate increased criminalization against the unhoused population and and more resources to police.

In August, the Asheville Coalition for Public Safety had a meeting with Todd Williams, the DA, to complain about panhandling. At the meeting Williams talked about a new North Carolina law called the Pretrial Integrity Act. This law makes it so for certain charges, a person can't be bonded out of jail until after 48 hours unless they have a hearing before a judge. He hinted that this would help them keep more people in jail.

This act went into effect at the beginning of October. I don't know if it's coincidental, but shortly after this, the Asheville Police Department began a campaign of sweeps targeting the unhoused population. This campaign is ongoing although not all the sweeps are being publicized. In the first they hit 62 people and in the second they hit 80-some.

In these sweeps they serve warrants and issue citations, so some folks end up getting arrested and others end up being criminalized so they may get arrested later. This Thursday I heard 6-8 people were arrested in one of these sweeps. I've heard that people are getting picked up for things as minor as carrying a tent.

Such charges might not stick, but the point is to tie people up in the system. It's been over two years now since the Aston park defendants were charged with felony littering and banned from parks, and the case is still ongoing.

This is bigger than just our city though. Capitalism is destroying the planet and immiserating increasingly larger segments of the population to maintain the power, safety, and standard of living for an increasingly small minority of wealthy people. How do you keep people from standing up against this death machine? This is the role of repression.

In the 60s and 70s, before the existence of what we know today as "mass incarceration", there were groups all over the country fighting for liberation who really thought they would see revolution in their lifetimes. The state engaged in extreme campaigns of repression, pioneering many techniques of subversion and counterintelligence to criminalize these groups that are still practiced today in more advanced forms. A lot of these freedom fighters are still in prison to this day. People like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin (formerly known as H Rap Brown), and Kamau Sadiki of the Black Panther Party, and Leonard Peltier of the American Indian Movement remain in prison. Many more are dead. This year we lost Mutulu Shakur who had been in prison since 1982. He had cancer and was released late last year after a doctor gave him only 3 months to live. Ed Poindexter and Ruchell Magee, who were also Black Liberation Movement prisoners, died in prison. Magee had been in prison since 1962.

The United States has more people in prison than any other country in the world, and marginalized groups are disproportionately targeted. Something like 1 in 10 black men and 1 in 3 black trans people do time in prison. North Carolina has around the same amount of people in prison as the entire country of France.

After the George Floyd uprising in 2020, the Atlanta Police Foundation saw an increased need to train police in urban warfare to fight future uprisings. To that end, they began pursuing a project to destroy the Weelaunee forest and build the largest police training center in the world known as "Cop City".

Police training in urban warfare tactics is nothing new. Police departments all over the country have been training with the Israeli Military for years now. Nowhere today is it more evident that our struggles are global than in the ongoing genocide against Palestinians. The Israeli military helps train our police to act as an occupying army and the genocide against Palestinians could not be perpetrated without the support of the United States. This is why we have a duty to fight it at home.

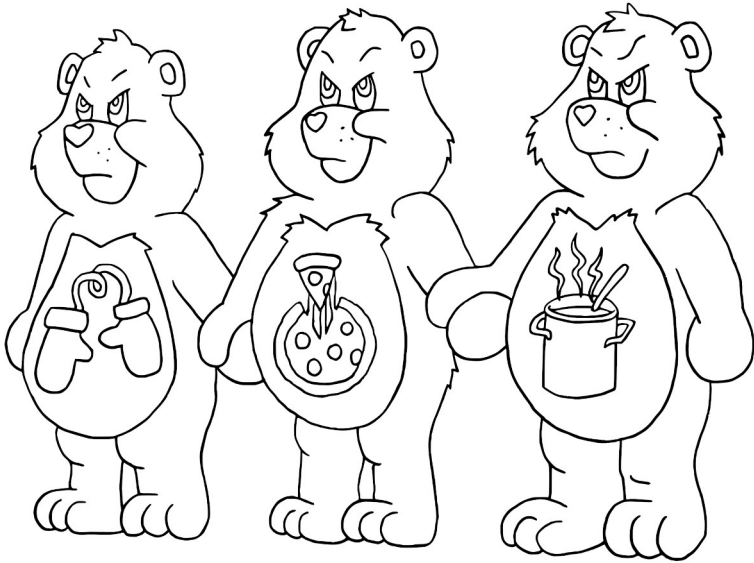
I should note that the largest pro-Israel lobbying group in the United States is Christians United for Israel. I feel the need to bring this up because Christianity often get a pass for its role in the Zionist project, which provides cover for antisemitism in the discourse around Israel. We have evangelical churches all around this area that raise money for Israel and preach genocidal anti-Arab and Islamophobic sermons, plus we have the new Pratt & Whitney plant opening soon to help build their fighter jets.

While police training in urban warfare tactics is not new. The Cop City project presents an alarming new trend. This would effectively be a military base on domestic soil for our militarized police forces, and other cities across the country are now pursuing their own Cop Cities. Many people who have been fighting this project are now facing domestic terrorism charges for acts as small as posting fliers or signing their name as "ACAB". It doesn't matter whether or not you've committed a crime. If you're doing anything that's effective, the state is going to target you.

The state is clear about its relationship to us. This is war. Those of us that want freedom and to live in a world without oppression, who value life more than property--we are the enemy. We're the terrorists, and the struggle doesn't end when we're in prison. We would do well to understand that and act accordingly.

This year we're trying something new. The bail fund is organizing round-the-clock-support at the jail, all day for the first day of 2024. The idea is to have people present at the jail every hour, starting at midnight on New Years Eve going to midnight on Jan 1. We'll greet people who are being released, offer material support like snacks, cigarettes, warm things, and a ride somewhere. It's going to be cold. Come find us if you want to take a shift.

With this action, we set an intention for strengthening our collective resolve and commitment to justice & liberation in the coming year. Amazing things are possible when we work together!



2:15 AM 1/1/24

JONE (ME), AND MY SWEET BUDDY B. JUST
WANDERED INTO THE JAIL FOR BAIL
SUPPORT. WE DON'T SUSPECT TOO MANY
FOLKS TO COME ~~IN~~ OUT RIGHT NOW
BUT WE'RE HERE. I SAW THE
JOY & PERSEVERANCE IN THE
NOISE AND DEMO (12/31/23)
~~AND~~ AND WILL KEEP THAT CLOSE.

~~ANY~~
2:26 AM 1/1/24

FRIENDS CAME IN AND WE
WERE KICKED OUT PROMPTLY.
WE APPEARED BUT PIGS B PIGS.
WE SAID ON THE STEPS,
WITNESSING. ONE MAN CAME
OUT AND WE OFFERED OUR
LOVE & SUPPORT. WITHOUT
THESE LOVED ONES, I WOULDN'T
BE HERE. WITHOUT YOU
THE ALL ENCOMPASSING YOU
I WOULDN'T BE HERE.
THANK YOU, I LOVE YOU

"IT DOESN'T MATTER,
YOU CAN'T WAIT
IN HERE."

BUT

ALL I SEE WHEN I
REMEMBER TO LOOK.

WHICH LEGS ARE
MOST IMPORTANT.
ONCE MY 3RD GRADE
BEST FRIEND PULLED
THE HANDS OFF A

BEETLE AND I

THOUGHT, WHAT
WOULD ALL THE
OTHER BEETLES THINK?
WOULD THEY REMEMBER
A FORCE THAT DISFIGURES
WITHOUT THOUGHT, FOR
THE FEELING OF KNOWING
PLACE AMONG US?

MAY I NEVER
KNOW.



LET US GO
TOGETHER. ♥

-JOJO

[WHAT IS THE OPPOSITE OF RAIN?]

HOW DO YOU COMPARE?
DOES THE JOY OF THOSE LOOKING
SIMILAR INSPIRE FEELINGS OF SAMENESS?
WHAT ABOUT THOSE OF SIMILAR OBJECTION?



[NO RAIN?
SNOW?
FIRE, FALLING?]

WHEN I SEE GOD,
IT'S HARD TO SEE YOU.
ISN'T THAT DIFFERENT?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I THINK
I'M TOLD. BUT IT TAKES
OBSERVING TO SEE WHERE
YOU'VE COMBED THEIR HAIR,
CARESSED THEIR CHEEK,
AND TENDED THEIR
WOUNDS.

GOD, PLEASE TEND US ALL.
I PROMISE, I'LL FOLLOW.

} DON'T WE
TOO TEND
GOD?

Do they do
probation testing
here today? My
pssers said Jan 1...

"Do you work here?"
Nope, just writing.

One of the things I'm

always struck by is how some of the
most meaningful interactions we have doing
prob support is actually with folks coming
in to visit for their loved ones. We can
offer them support too, in the form of a
piece of information -- "Yes, you can press the
intercom button" -- or just a sympathetic ear.

When the man comes in confused and worried
because his girlfriend is supposed to do a probation
test, but her P.O. isn't answering the phone because
it's New Year's Day, we don't have any answers,
but we help him ~~make~~^{get} to the magistrate, and
he thanks us -- a genuine appreciation that
someone was here, a caring presence instead of
an empty lobby and the glare of fluorescent lights.

8:00 AM

We spend the hour chatting,
and it's so lovely. The time
goes by almost too fast. I find
myself wanting to hang out longer.
I would have been just getting out
of bed, having my morning coffee,
but instead I am here, making a
new friend; this is part of what
keeps me in this work -- the
building of community. It's the part
of "activism" I find difficult to
explain to folks outside of movement
spaces.

9:00 AM

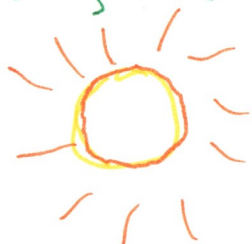


Came in at 10 to relieve Q. + J. They seemed to be having a blast chatting with each other. Shortly thereafter, a young woman gets released and tries to use the phone, which is of course not a public phone. J. asks her if she needs help and she says "Yes, I think so." What she needs is a ride to West Asheville, so Q. offered her a ride. She was so happy to get a ride, as well as snacks, a drink, and cigs. She also might need a ride to court tomorrow so we'll get in touch with her about that. Yay! This is what jail support is all about! B. + N. here now.....



10:00 AM

the 11 AM hour is quiet except on the jail side except for a couple of bible thumpers leaving after leading "bible study." Ugh. The magistrate's side is busy. There's a family trying to bail out a member for \$K, arrested last night for "resisting." Probably another example of a needless, trivial arrest that is going to start a horrible chain of events for a brown 27 year old having fun on N4E.



Sunshine!

Nice after a dreary morning.

The family is waiting on a bail bondsman, who they'll give \$500 to and never see it again. This does not seem like a family who has an extra \$500 — and even if they did, why give it to the big insurance company paying the bondsman's salary?

11:00 AM

I wish ACBF was in a position to help out!

Arrived at noon + got to meet B&N, who were very helpful + showed me the ropes. B + I talked for a bit about the noise demo last night, and I shared how I teared up seeing people flashing their lights and banging on windows. I always get emotional about it - the reality that we live in a place that puts millions of people in cages. I'm new to a11 and so grateful to be finding community w/ folx committed to our collective liberation.

A highlight for me this hour was the little human, maybe 2yo or so, who was very curious and kept coming up to me to say "holz" and then "bye". I work with toddlers and love them so, so this really brought a big smile to my face that I hope they could see in my eyes if not through my mask.

12:00 PM



thinking about
the sweet flowers
that were given out
last night... mine is in
a little mason jar on
my kitchen table
at home

I do a lot of thinking about what is wrong in the world because... well, things are hellish and have been for a long while. I'm trying to spend more time, and make intentional space for, imagining. Imagining a world without police, prisons, genocide, war, billionaires, ecocide. Currently reading Practicing New Worlds, continuing to learn & practice emergent strategy. Taking inspiration from revolutionary science fiction writers and visionaries. I see and talk with this little toddler, who is waiting with their family in this stale and terrible building... and I just want to see them playing and singing in a place without surveillance cameras and U.S. flags. I want everyone to be at home or sharing food or skipping stones in a creek... anywhere but here. Anyway, I feel renewed in my commitment to turn my grief into action this year. Until we're all free.

- someone was released around 1:40
+ had a couple ppl waiting for them already to support + give a ride

1:00 PM

"let your sadness
turn to moss
breaking down the stones
of a thousand
prisons"

"let your anger
turn to rust
gnawing at the bones
of a thousand
war machines"

2:11pm It makes me smile to see C when I open the doors - a new face in ACBF. I think it's brave to sit here for 2 hours without a buddy when you're new to town. I remember being new to the group + new to the work. The bail fund has been such a political home to me these past couple years - where I learn, hold + be held, deepen my practice, gets to live what it means to be an abolitionist every day.

2:49pm With the funds raised over the past week, we're able to bail out someone we previously posted for who later had charges added + wasn't released. It feels good to see fundraising efforts make a direct impact. What if we didn't have to post on social media to buy someone's freedom? What if the concept of even having to buy freedom didn't fucking exist? What happens when we keep showing up with + for each other consistently, lovingly, relentlessly? What can we do together?



← poster in the room next to where we wait. the cognitive dissonance is jarring. garish empty decoration built solely to instill fear, obliterate hope.

2:00 PM

3:12pm A young white family is here to file an IVC form. I wish none of us ever learned to weaponize these systems against each other. I wish for, hope for, work for healing for all of us. When every system you live under wants you dead, who's really "crazy"?

3:45-36 2 hours goes by fast. It took almost half that time just to post bail for someone - someone I've been trying to post bail for since November.

How is the shrubby outside the door still green?

How do people get married here? Such a weird place. so casual and matter-of-fact about its "business."

 I want chickie nuggies but we're boycotting baby!
Free Palestine ❤️

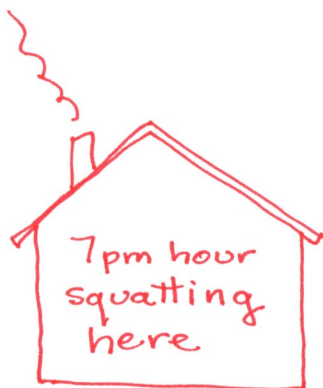
3:00 PM





this is a really cute and awesome
log to have for today is
My first time doing anything
~~for~~ w/ the bail fund, am
excited to do more! Thanks y'all
for everything you do.

4:00 PM



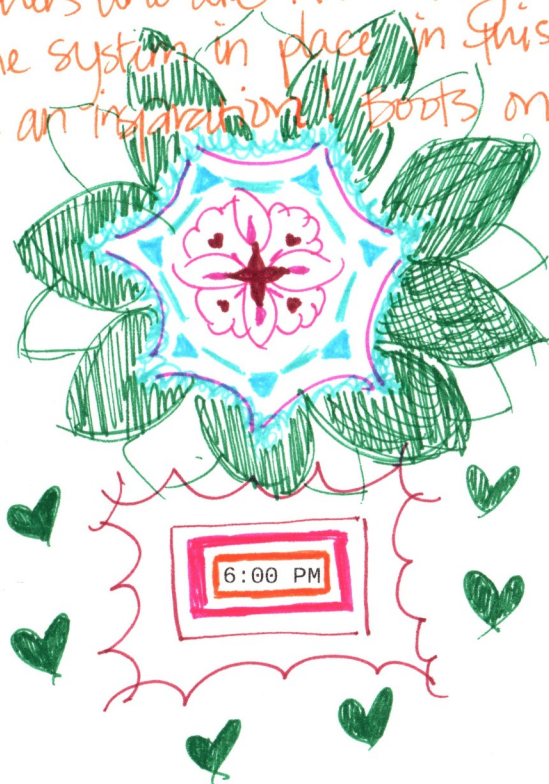
5:00 PM

Hi there.

This is my first time doing bail-bond (fund) support. I am new to the area, and was invited to accompany a new friend here after discussing her involvement in this community.

Reading this log is inspiring and I look forward to meeting others who are active in this community! Thank you all for being here and showing me a way.

To help others who are inhumanely treated by the insane system in place in this country. Y'all are an inspiration! Boots on the ground!



the next few pages are blank because the
people who were doing jail support were busy
helping out a person who got released

7:00 PM

8:00 PM

9:00 PM

Woooo!
 We're almost at
 the end of this marathon
 and dang it's cool to read this
 record of the day! And to know how
 many folks got support today, in one way or another,
 some of which didn't make it in here because folks were
 doing support!! It's also really sweet to see new folks getting
 involved, and to see us meeting each other in these pages.

Brick by Brick
 Wall by Wall
 We will make your
 prisons FALL!!

END BAIL
 CASH NOW!

overhears:
 "My brother's on
 the police a/c there
 he broke religiously.
 He didn't even
 dip to see what
 it looked like
 at his trial
 it looked up."

Random
 with
 in
 @

in prison to simple question, what's really
 matter in off the wall
 K said of theology
 But we introduce a new
 surprise that is not something
 to the Day In we turning
 which he doesn't, but he's wondering
 mine explain here to see if we
 next to the police. after hearing
 and spoke to the police. after hearing
 came in (from outside)
 got five, a man
 almost
 as soon as in

10:00 PM

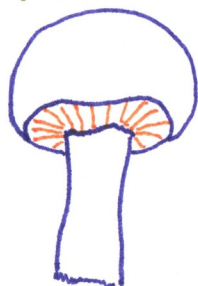
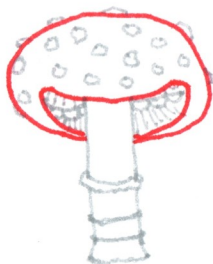


— RISE IN POWER —

MUTULU SHAKUR
RUCHELL MAGEE
ALFREDO BONANNO
ED POINDEXTER
KLEE BENALLY
TORTUGUITA

2024

*Onwards, toward justice
and liberation...*



11:00 PM

KOOL-AID CIGARETTE

From the cinderblock ledge we watch the sun
go down in a violence of pink, the streetlights
flicking on
dulling the sharp edge of darkness to a rusty
purplish brown.

You say you don't know how much longer
you'll last in here.

I struggle for the words
I'm supposed to say— it gets better, or you are loved,
or happiness, like a freight train in the distance,
its on its way. You've been to suicide watch twice
already:
the cement room they threw you in
naked, not even a cloth when you were on your period,
with the two-way mirror they sat behind and watched
you beg for water.

And why am I still writing, why
is there more of a poem after this?

Because the world spits out more creatures, because
life
continues, brutally, because you are alive
and you ask me, on they cinderblock ledge, to write
you and I do—
I write you about sunsets,

about the body with its cathedral of veins,
about the kool-aid cigarette you made, red bleeding
through the soft places where we sucked the
sweetness out
like marrow from a bone—
things beautiful and undeserved.

I write you about this mistake I've made:
thinking life is only the most difficult and tender
stuff.

When beauty rests at the bottom of everything
like a tough bone remaining
after all else is picked clean, asking nothing but
your attention.

Is this enough to live on? I don't know,

so I slip the note under your cell door
with some butterscotch and kool-aid packs to make up
for what I can't say—
maybe to make up for every injustice,
every cruelty , maybe just so you'll roll me
another cigarette
and we'll have a reason
to both be here tomorrow.

<https://avlcommunitybail.carrd.co/>