A person carrying a surf board in the dark

Description automatically generatedReflections from ~~1980~~ 2020

by Ricardo London

Let's turn back the hands of time, for just a moment.

Let's reflect, go old school, and listen to our restless souls.

Close your eyes, free your mind and listen to one of the real godfathers of rap,

that many are not aware of - a musical artist who had a message years ago…

And another musical Artist that delivered hope and inspiration through his Lyrics…”Old School”;…

a time, growing pains in this country…good and bad! yet, here we are, not in the late 60’s and 70’s of Berkeley, but year 2020: same pain, same hurt, same frustration, same prejudices, racism and violence.

So, what have we learned??

Lionel Richie,”Zoom”; he spoke to that hope, our visions, Love and Freedom…

Gil Scott-Heron, “The Revolution Will Not Be Televised”…

And here we are today! Stronger than ever, more united,

Young & Old of All Colors and backgrounds.

Our time has come, we have learned from history and our mistakes …

Violence begets Violence!! Yet, we have had some misguided anger-

Understandable, as we feel the pains & frustrations of another Black Man,

another Human, killed by another racist puppet of this racist system.

But now that our rage and pains have taken focus,

we see that we have the power to really initiate real change!

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised…”ZOOM” in;

Harness the Power of The People and Real Change come from WITHIN!!

I know; after over 40 years of being a blind slave to incarceration

and believing how the system labelled me;

seeing and experiencing brutality and death at the hands of our racist captors,

I learned to break and change those shackles of racism and slavery…,

by changing what existed “**inside me**”; our captors could no longer influence, mislead or control me…

And so I regained My Freedom, My Dignity, My Humanity and Respect & Love For ALL.

So, I know Change is Possible!!

Together, We Can Change this corrupt and racist system…from WITHIN!!

We have the Power to Elect, to place good people in positions to lead our society,

to help in our process of change.

Yet, our real strength is from our children: as we pass the torch to them;

they will carry out and accomplish the torch we light today!!

So, lets just take that “old school” moment;

relax and reflect…let’s talk and communicate –

join our forces and energy, and start truly dismantling

the corruption and brutality of racism from the inside out.

A sign in front of a brick building

Description automatically generated

**An Echo of Dying,**

by Ricardo London

Too many days, years,

lost celebrations and seasons,

have escaped in front of me

for too many heartless reasons.

with heart and mind I sit & wait,

it seems I don't have control

over my destiny, or fate …

Encaged…enraged

A vicious animal in breed ,

riding the crest of the tide

upon insanity's seed …

Shattered hopes, dusty dreams,

flickering wishes, fading beams…

I've seen love grow old, felt it go stale,

have experienced the pains

of receiving no mail,

have seen my children grow up

and even die,

have seen society’s changing times,

The horrors, the destruction of our pains and prejudices ,tick by…

Encaged…Enraged.

A criminal in breed,

Acting in frustration

or in surging need…

Constant clatter, chilling feel,

knowing your existence is between -

Behind the slamming of that gate of steel,

the same faces, only aging

year in and year out -

the unsureness of our tomorrows,

in anguish doubt.

The meals turn tasteless,

my visions are now faceless.

Dying entities in the air

lacking meaning, or care.

The steel bars I peer through

catching glimpses of the sky

dancing in shades of blue -

chirps of a bird, patter of rain,

bring a small sense of joy

to the incarcerated pain.

And, still I sit and wait -

Not knowing, how much longer I can,

and desperately holding on

trying to remain, whole, a man -

Encaged…enraged.

The bitterness it builds,

attempting to crush the spirit

destroying human wills,

Naked I've stood, privacy

of manhood disrespected,

over every inch of body

their eyes have inspected.

Mental torture, senseless beatings - death is common

within vengeful meetings.

Corruption it breeds,

spreading piercing misery

that feeds… the silent nights

of isolation -

thoughts of loved ones and friends in separation.

They suffer our hardships

with distant fear,

live with us every second, while we're here.

Encaged! Enraged!!...

Justice has been blind;

manufactured labels and lies -

truth is hard to find.

And, too many years

have passed us by,

too many dried tears

in the solemn eye.

With history, our witness

to the atrocities, we were forced to endure.

Another day of pain, racism and death in prison, in life,

Our future begins, once again unsure …

Blamed and shamed

in this racism it finds,

tormented and frustrated

our anger and pain

the crippling of minds.

Another good man,

another black man,

murdered again.

When does it end?

I don't understand –

yet today, I hear laughter

from our youth still here,

and hope prison will be over

and racism too.

the human heart, is too dear,

We are enraged,

ENGAGED,

Still struggling,

still free

STILL HERE!!

Written in Nov.27, 1980…

Revised on June 1, 2020