



Artista, Alicia Maria Siu

New Dreams, Visions, and Horizons

Johnny Howe, Santa Cruz Barrios Unidos Prison Project

I can remember back when I was a young boy
I wasn't interested in sports, games, or the latest toy.
I remember thinking about joining a gang and selling drugs
It seemed like all I ever really wanted was to be a thug.
I was willing to do whatever I could just to fit in.
Even if that meant killing someone and going to the pen
Looking back I never realized how low was my self esteem
And how I would try to hide it by acting mean.
At the age of 17 I remember walking into court.
I looked around and had absolutely no support.
I had always believed that the homies would always be there
Now that I have just got sentenced to life I couldn't find one anywhere.

So now on my way to prison I go
With my old distorted beliefs and still willing to go with the flow.
I'm still doing the same things I was doing on the streets
20 years later, involved in gangs, doing drugs, and feeling the heat.
I know I need to change my beliefs if I want to get out.
At 40 years old, I'm finally learning what life is really about.

It's not about being selfish, hurting others, or throwing away your life.
It's about being of service, starting a family and having a wife.
It's about walking on the beach, enjoying life, and having fun.
I now know it's not about trying to impress others or carrying a gun.
As I lay back and allow myself to dream in this empty cell
The one thing I know for sure is I no longer want to die in this hell.
Now I dream about helping others who have the problems I had
Showing them that their dreams and visions don't have to be sad. Explaining to others
that the choices they make can be their own.
That they don't have to come to prison and make it their permanent home.
I now understand that change starts in the mind
I look back and realized that I was so blind.
I hold on to my new dream of finally being free
Even though I haven't taken one step out of this penitentiary.
My new vision is of being at the beach lying in the sun
It's no longer about why I got an extra five years for possession of a gun.
As I watch the horizon through these prison bars,
I remind myself to never stop reaching for the stars.