

*The following selection of poems were penned by Freddy Gutierrez and featured in the Arte Publico Press publication, **Latino Young Men and Boys, In Search of Justice, Testimonies**; Curated and Edited by Frank de Jesus Acosta and Co-Edited by Henry A.J. Ramos. The poems were mis-attributed and/or the name was mis-spelled in the original print publication and will be corrected in future editions.*

***Some Advice to Those Who Will Facilitate Arts on the Inside***

*Freddy Gutierrez, Writer and Teaching Artist  
Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice (CURYJ)  
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If instead of landing that ideal gig  
    at the University  
    or the live/work space with studio, stag, or gallery  
you find yourself volunteering  
with people you ain't never known  
whose lives you may have only seen at the margins  
do say that it is a big thing,  
it's like the blossoming of a gnarly tree in winter to the person inside

Do tell the people on the inside  
about your life, your struggle  
as an artist trying to make ends meet  
    trying to forge your artistry with social responsibility  
about the margins you write, paint, and perform  
your way out of.

You may not always understand  
a point of view  
or bit of prison politics  
but remember,  
don't trip about the difference  
for inside you'll find fields of flowers  
    every incarcerated person has a bit of soil to nourish,  
think about the seeds and tools that art can offer.

Listen to the nuance of a gesture  
catch the shine in one's eyes  
when something you present  
resonates in the soul  
and the group clicks  
and you experience a moment of solidarity.

But don't ask for personal revelations on the first day, first month even  
    the work behind the walls takes time  
    remember how long it took for you just to get in

how long a person locked up has been waiting  
bear in mind the weight of a sentence.

And if the men and woman you learn with  
get transferred put in the hole or released  
keep the memory of them alive  
in the space between the fire in your chest  
and the light within your skull  
for they are people,  
    much even like you,  
        sucker punched by circumstance  
        searching for the viability of their craft  
        and shining  
        in the dimmest of places.