

# Nine Poems



by

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## **Cabrini Green Screams**

I was born and raised in CABRINI GREEN,  
I can go back to the days when I was a kid  
makin' mud pies around the buildin'.  
Up until I got grown and witnessed many killings.  
I seen the makin' of life,  
and the takin' of life.  
The adulterer husband  
and the adulteress wife.  
I seen a boy smarter than a historian,  
become a valedictorian,  
only to become a dope-fiend, I seen.  
Everyday in my building the elevator don't work,  
and girls get their feelings hurt,  
we only want what's under the miniskirt.  
Anyway, everyday I smell urine in the building  
hallway.  
As I got older,  
I heard more shots than a Vietnam soldier.  
I been hit by cars, bats, bullets, and fists.  
But I can't quit,  
because I'm addicted to this shit.  
The pain I feel, the pain I inflict,  
I get a real kick out of it.  
I been shot at many times,  
but very seldom hit or skent.  
I can see my brother now  
shot on the ground with his body bent.

In CABRINI I lost my brother,  
best friends and just friends.  
Through the years I shed so many tears.  
But I had more happy ones than sad ones,  
because I always pay back the bad ones.  
In the hood where they  
snap, fight, and smoke the pipe.  
Get money while its sunny,  
because we shooting all through the night.  
I look up at the sky  
and see those buildings standing tall.  
I look up at the ceiling  
and see roaches on the wall.  
I looked and seen the wounded die  
because the ambulance stall.  
Waiting around for the police to get a call.

In CABRINI GREEN,  
where the streets are mean,  
infested with rats, roaches and dope-fiends,  
funerals, burials and crime scenes.  
If you want to make it out keep your nose clean.  
and your eye on the cream dream.

In CABRINI GREEN  
I seen my old girlfriend  
she got seven kids now.  
I remember she used to run around,  
looking pretty with her colorful barrette.  
She ain't nothing now  
but the average hoodrat.

Wearin' weave, smoking weed,  
and not takin' heed.  
For this is another year  
she not going to bleed,  
and already she have seven kids  
she can barely feed.

School vacation is the only time  
we ate breakfast made by our momma.  
And when we eat free lunch  
with everybody in the summer.  
A choke-burger, potato chips, a milk or juice,  
I grew up reading graffiti on the wall  
not DR. SUESS.  
That's how I learn how to spell  
bitch, hoe and shit,  
fuck-you, pussy and dick.  
Plus the words love, together, and forever.  
That's something I'll never forget.

Sometimes I think back on this  
and I feel better,  
but sometimes I get pissed.  
Why our young, black and gifted  
got to go through this?

My mother did her best  
to keep me innocent.  
But how can I remain innocent,  
when I'm constantly exposed to insolence,  
incidents, and premeditated violence.

Plus, the profound sounds that surround  
my life won't let me enjoy the silence.  
The profanity, shooting, and sirens.

It's hard in the hood,  
because the police think everybody is up to no  
good,  
so, the innocent is often misunderstood.  
Because their friends are dope-fiends,  
dope dealers, killers, and called niggers.  
So they are guilty by association.  
What do the police expect,  
neighbors not to hold a conversation?

I know I'm prone to doing wrong,  
that's why my criminal record is long.  
But there are still some innocent people  
in the place we call home.

In CABRINI GREEN,  
where the streets are mean,  
infested with rats,  
roaches and dope-fiends,  
funerals, burials and crime scenes.  
Right now, in my head I can hear  
the CABRINI cries and screams.

<6-21-00>

## **Strong Will Bill**

Brother Bill,  
almost every night I saw him  
standing on the killin' field.  
Whether he was feeling good or ill,  
Bill still will be on the field,  
Trying to make sure there's peace  
where we live.  
His love, life, and the attention he give,  
Is highly appreciated,  
because you can feel it's real.  
Bill will get in front of you while there's shootin',  
like a bullet-proof shield—

This is just an example of  
Brother Bill's strong will.  
HE say this is all GOD'S plan,  
and it's all in GOD'S hand.  
So when Brother Bill puts on his blue robe,  
he change into the Holy Superman.  
Fearin' no evil as we know,  
and where there is evil he conquer it wherever he  
go.  
So nobody's family don't have to go  
to a funeral.

Brother Bill no longer works alone,  
he keep a partner on the side of him.  
He wear a blue robe too,



and his name is Brother Jim.  
This doubles the courage,  
because shootin' and gang-bangin'  
don't bother them—  
they get right in the middle,  
and slow it down a little.

Now that the shootin' and gang-bangin'  
is at an all-time low,  
it's because the work and respect  
for Bill and Jim is beginning to show,  
The dynamic duo.

Wherever there is snipin' out of a window,  
Bill is told to lay low.  
But he refuse and go in the opening  
protected by his halo.  
He don't discriminate between  
the gangs he hangs with:  
Gangster Disciples, Lords, and Snakes  
all love him the same.  
We all glad that he came to Cabrini Green  
because Brother Bill  
and Jim have changed the rules of the game  
For the better forever.

<7-27-01>

## Lost Souls Hidden in Plain View

Are we forgotten,  
or have we become transparent?  
Because it's apparent.  
when our problems are addressed,  
the peoples who supposed to have the solution  
become incompetent or incoherent.  
We are a lost people  
hidden in plain view.  
Our habitation is not overseas,  
but right down the street from you.  
We've put forth our best efforts,  
and many attempts to get your attention,  
it really hurts to be ignored—this I must mention.  
Some of us is startin' to believe  
that we are transparent and voiceless.

But I know we have a voice,  
Because I can hear the cries of pain,  
the holler and screams of help,  
and when a frustrated soul complain.  
But all of this has been fallin' on deaf ears  
for many years.  
Our existence seems not to exist,  
our presence is like an absence  
because we go unnoticed,  
and don't seem to be missed.

We have been a lost people  
hidden in plain view for centuries.  
Living in plain view locations,

such as the penitentiaries, projects, and plantations.  
We are not only lost physically,  
because our presence has been ignored,  
But we are lost mentally as well,  
because our names, cultures, and language have been  
destroyed  
and forgotten.  
So now, when we raise our kids,  
we teach them English Religion, and Holidays  
of the peoples who is obviously visionable.  
But when our children grow up and realize  
that they are going unnoticed and are invisible,  
some of them will create attention,  
but the majority will fall victim and be miserable.  
I don't know how long we will be a lost people  
hidden in plain view.

What I do know is that my people is not transparent,  
because we are the first children of the earth-parent.  
They could continue to ignore our physical form,  
but they can't ignore our five universal elements  
and our spiritual rain and lightning so they feel and  
hear us in the form of a storm.

They take notice of us  
and give us recognition,  
when we are being falsely accused  
and when the record reflect  
that we are wanted suspects.  
But no one notice when we are victims,  
and stuck in a system that's created to victimize.  
So our complaints will continue to fall on deaf ears,  
and our conditions will continue to be seen by blind  
eyes.

So they don't see the hate-crimes, racial profiling, and  
the Ku Klux Klan disguise.  
nor do they see the cruel and unusual punishment,  
over-sentencing and over-crowded penitentiaries  
nationwide.

For, my brother and sisters that are hidden in plain view,  
they are playing a psychological game with me and you.  
Because if we are not transparent and invisible during  
the elections,  
I'm damn sure we can be heard and seen in the ghettos  
and the house of corrections.

How long are we going to allow them  
to treat us like the peoples living under the steps,  
before we decide to walk those steps together,  
to make our living conditions here better?  
We can't continue to act like we are lost  
when we know our way.  
We can't continue to let them pretend that we are hidden  
when they see us everyday.  
I don't know how they think they are greater than us—  
we all was created the same,  
we all came from clay.  
So we all think, learn, cry, pain, and pray the same,  
but in our own way.  
If we were transparent they wouldn't call us colored  
peoples,  
If we couldn't be heard—our music, they would've  
never stolen it or used it.

So we are living in a magic trick,  
they put us in a box and gave the American audience  
the illusion that we had disappeared, but we are still  
here:  
Hidden behind the trap door  
of the ghettos and prisons, but we don't want to be lost  
or hidden no more,  
and our collective decision is:  
if we got to be here, we want to be a part of the  
AMERICAN VISION.

<1-10-01>

## **My Window in Cabrini Green**

Could you believe the beautiful view  
that I had from my apartment?  
Early in the morning I open my eyes,  
and watch the sun rise.

It's amazing how it look like it coming from  
underneath the water on the beach.  
The rising sun always speaks to me, it says  
"Good morning."  
So, I say, "Hello."  
to the sun's rays, orange, red, brown and yellow.

It doesn't matter how high or low the blue angels  
fly.  
I can still see the airplane show.  
Because I could see for blocks and blocks.  
The Oak Street Beach, downtown,  
and the John Hancock.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July when the sky go dark,  
I can see the fireworks in Grant Park.  
Most of all I can see the Chicago landmark,  
the Sears Tower.  
I sat in my apartment for many years  
looking at this scenery for many hours.  
you have to go into my soul  
to truly understand  
what exactly this means,

to a kid exposed to a beautiful view  
from an apartment in Cabrini Green.

This beautiful view from my window  
wasn't an illusion, it truly exists.  
I used it as an escape from my society,  
and my angry feelings when I'm pissed.

You can try and try but  
you can never imagine this.  
Because first you got to feel the  
excruciating pain of the hood.  
Then be able to go and look at beautiful scenery  
that will make you feel good. Then, and only then,  
the view from my window can be understood.

Very few eyes have looked through my window  
and weren't surprised by the view and what it can  
do for you:  
My window view in Cabrini Green.

<11-14-00>

## On The Inside

I gaze up at the stars  
while my hands clench the bars.  
You can see the pain in my knuckles.  
I been standing here so long,  
my knees are about to buckle.  
But I refuse to fall,  
because there is no one here  
to pick me back up.  
So I must remain standing tall.

I constantly find myself reminiscent  
about things I'm missing.  
As I gaze up at the stars,  
about FAMILY, RELATIONSHIPS, FRIENDSHIP,  
MONEY, SEX AND CARS.

On the inside,  
all we want most is to know:  
Are we forgotten on the outside?  
Because here they have taken everything else  
from us except our pride.

I still got my integrity and dignity,  
because I am a man.  
They'll take that too if they can,  
and say it was contraband.  
If you want to know what compliance means,  
take a good look at our chow-line  
then you will understand.



They dictate to a man,  
how to wear his shirt and pants.  
When and where to walk and stand.  
And what signals not to do with his hands.  
Then they got the nerve to give you a hat,  
and tell you how to wear that.

The only reason why we in compliance,  
is because we are threatened with  
TICKETS, C-GRADE, AND SEGREGATION  
for our defiance.

But I don't plan to live the rest of my life  
by the rules made by man.  
that's why I keep the SCRIPTURES,  
the HOLY words, in my head,  
while these bars are in my hand.  
Until, I go back to common land,  
on the outside.

I'm not takin' nothing with me  
from the inside but my pride.  
I'm leavin' the GAME, SLICK SLANG AND QUO\*S.  
Because I'm aware of the fact  
that I'll be surrounded by LIARS, HYPOCRITES, AND  
CUTTHROATS  
On the outside.

But I will be sure to take note,  
to advantage of the time with  
my WIFE, FAMILY, and NEW HOPE.

The stars are fading away,  
because the sun is coming up.  
I'm still holding these bars  
and standing up.  
ON THE INSIDE  
OF THE PENITENTIARY.

<9-8-00>

## **Pall Bearer**

I have carried you in many ways.  
but I never thought I'd have  
to carry you over so many graves.  
I remember me and you carrying  
our other homies.  
Now I'm carrying you;  
man, I feel lonely.

I'm going to keep one of these gloves,  
that I'm carrying you with  
as a symbol of love.  
Man, you is one person I'll never forget.  
But the other one, I'm going to  
send it with you.  
To serve as a constant reminder  
that I was willing to give you  
a hand in everything you been through.

Now I know what they mean about the green mile,  
When the shortest walk seem like a long  
distance and dread without a smile.  
When we was younger who would have knew,  
that I would be the pall-bearer carrying  
you.

I never thought I'd be pouring out brew in your name.  
I reminisce now by myself,  
thinking about your ghetto fame.  
You can bet my next born  
will have your first name.

I think about our yesterdays, because everyday  
we used to hang.  
Now, I think about the days ahead  
because without you my tomorrows  
won't be the same.

I can stand the rain,  
but I can't stand the pain.  
Because the rain hides the tears,  
but the pain show it all.  
Because it breaks you down.  
I can't see how anybody can stand tall.  
When their homie bein' lowered into the ground.

Rev. said "Ashes to ashes and dust to dust."  
That's when I knew there wasn't  
no more me and you.  
No more police chasin' us.  
But don't trip, you can still get the last  
shot of Hennessey.

So, when you hear me say,  
"THIS IS FOR THE BROTHERS THAT AREN'T HERE,"  
I'm talking about you and the rest of the crew.  
Who is dead and gone,  
Oh yeah, I'm going to buy you a head stone,  
So I can have something to look at and talk to  
when I'm in the cemetery all alone.  
SINCERELY: YOUR HOMIE, AND BODY CARRIER,  
AND SADDEST PALL-BEARER.

<11-24-00>

## Split Personality

My second personality  
is a reflection of a twin.  
One living righteously,  
the other live in sin.  
My first and second mind  
is talking with me,  
and walking with me.  
I take a deep breath,  
As I listen to my right  
and then turn to listen  
to my left.

Like the ANGEL and the DEVIL,  
the PREACHER and the REBEL.  
They go together like  
the low-down DIRT,  
and the good clean SHOVEL.  
When the first mind get dirty  
things get filthy.  
Because the second mind is innocent,  
it keeps bringing back the same thoughts,  
trying to make the first mind feel guilty.  
Split personality is hard to deal with,  
live with.  
Naw, it's easy.  
I can make it,  
I can shake it.

It's been like this since I was born,  
my thoughts flip like a coin.  
HEADS or TAILS,  
HEAVEN or HELL,  
the STREETS or JAIL.  
All these choices and decisions,  
my thoughts having collisions.  
No matter, no exception,  
I always have two answers for only one question.

I can't deal with myself,  
I want to kill myself.  
Yes, I could live with myself.  
Then again, I'm my own rival.  
I'm suicidal,  
naw, I'm homicidal.  
Damn, I don't even know my own title.

<7-25-01>

## The Broke Wing Bird

I want to leave this place  
but I'm stuck without a choice.  
It's like screaming at the top of your lungs  
without a voice.  
So I smoke cigarette after cigarette  
then ask for a short on a square.  
This supposed to calm my nerves  
but I'm still pulling out my hair.  
I tried to talk to another bird  
but he didn't say one positive word.  
Well, he must be content with his  
three worms a day and free nest.  
But I'm waitin' for the day to fly away  
until then I'm not going to rest.  
Right now, my left wing is in a sling  
and I can't do a thing.  
My wing is getting better every day.  
The time is coming for me to put the wind  
under my feathers and fly away.  
I'm going to put my head in the clouds  
right underneath the sun,  
flying for miles—I can't wait for that day to come.  
Until then I've got no choice  
but to wait.  
My wing is broke but not my hope  
so I got to keep the faith.

(5-20-00)

## The Day Is Coming

I already know,  
the day is going to come,  
when the MOON or SUN  
is not going to glow,  
and the flowers is not going  
to grow.  
Cold is falling from the sky-  
its JULY.  
Plus, the ground is full of snow.

The stars start falling  
everybody's running for cover, PRAYING  
and it's GOD they are calling.  
But it's too late to repent,  
you didn't believe HIS SON was sent.

I hate to say,  
for some this is the last DAY.  
Look to the EAST  
someone is coming WEST sitting  
on a CLOUD  
he look like a BLACK MAN!!!  
Listen to those horns  
they are getting loud.

IT'S HE WHO WAS,  
AND HE WHO IS,  
AND WHO IS TO COME.



Its JUDGMENT DAY  
and there is no place to  
HIDE or RUN.

MATTHEW CHAPTER 13, VERSES 41-43:  
“THE SON OF MAN SHALL SEND FORTH HIS ANGELS,  
AND THEY SHALL GATHER OUT OF HIS KINGDOM ALL  
THINGS THAT OFFEND, AND THEM WHICH DO  
INIQUITY;  
AND SHALL CAST THEM INTO A FURNACE OF FIRE:  
THERE SHALL BE WAILING AND GNASHING OF TEETH.  
THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH AS THE  
SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER. WHO HATH  
EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR.”

So I'm going to repeat it twice,  
THE DAY IS COMING,  
THE DAY IS COMING.  
THE DAY IS NEAR!!!!!!

<8-27-00>

## About Gold-D

Gold-D was born and raised in Cabrini Green. He has enjoyed writing poetry since he was a little boy, and has received numerous awards for his poetry and short stories, including an award given by Gwendlyn Brooks.

His vivid poetry has also caught the attention of movie producer Judge Reinhold and may be featured in an upcoming Hollywood film.

At the age of twelve, Gold-D joined a gang and gradually rose through the ranks. He has been shot and incarcerated numerous times due to his gang activities. Today, he considers himself retired. He has six daughters and lives with his wife on the west side of Chicago.

He has traveled with Catholic Charities of Chicago and given lectures for the Brothers and Sisters of Love, a ministry which has deeply touched his life.

His writing has only recently been made available to a wider audience. He has the distinction of being one of Cabrini Green's most prolific poets, and hopes that through his writing students, scholars, entire households, street-hustlers, and everyone who loves and enjoys poetry may become more familiar with the literature of the ghetto.