

PRISONERS' STRUGGLES

We Conceive Justice

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason Tighe Fong is a Kamilaroi man, incarceration survivor and poet. He co-founded Beyond the Bars Art to provide First Nations men an outlet to express themselves and their creativity after leaving prison. Jason reads his poetry at First Nations deaths in custody protests and stands in solidarity with his brothers in prison.

POEM

We conceive justice, as innocent till proven guilty, not vice versa

We conceive justice
as never being held captive inside a million-dollar prison machine
where money is its only interest
the rest is left to mess

We conceive justice
where officers of the law and prison
can stop mistreatin us
for some of their misgivings
perceivin us as paycheck decisions

We conceive justice
as having realistic incentives
real goals to aim for
more positive reasons to wanna live
so when we are released
it'll be possible to be productive
an asset to our community
like the very few we grew up with

We conceive justice
where all society are aware

there can't be rehabilitation
without optimistic incentives there

We conceive justice
where we're not herded up like cattle
branded a number
then thrown to the slaughter to rattle

We conceive justice
where we're all communication
all on an equal plain
where both sides come together to understand
but band together to comprehend

We conceive justice
where Indigenous inmates, mainly the younger
who may feel displaced, stressed
grief or whatever
made mandatory to see them straight away
by a couple of brothers or sisters
to speak to, have a yarn with
or just be there as listeners
so their aware, they're not alone
know their supported
together we will sort it
instead of postponed till next mornin

We conceive justice
where there's more positive support networks
for any country brother in the city
thinkin they alone, no self-worth
the same for city brothers on country earth
yes, we will conceive justice
and will keep seeking justice
till that brighter day
when finally, maybe just finally
justice can and will conceive us